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History of the rise
and progress of the

Wm. Green. 1859.

Baptists in Virginia

TO

THE BAPTIST GENERAL MEETING OF
CORRESPONDENCE,

AND TO

THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS IN VIRGINIA,


THIS BOOK

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR,*

*Who (I believe) was R. B.
Herricks, pastor of Brown &
ington. See pp. 9, 123, and
the title and probable
date of the publication,
see p. viii.



PREFACE.

UNLESS the Compiler is wholly deceived in himself, his attempt to write a history of the VIRGINIA BAPTISTS, did not spring, either from the love of money or the love of fame. To say that these things never entered his thoughts, would be saying what no one would believe. His motive was an ardent wish for the prosperity of truth; which he really thought, could be greatly promoted, by a plain and simple exhibition of God's dealings towards his people. The rise and rapid spread of the Baptists in Virginia were so remarkable, that there are but few, who do not believe that some historical relation of them will be productive of real advantage to true religion. So much were our revolutionary reformers persuaded of this, that they made arrangements as early as 1788, to collect materials and publish a history; as may be seen by turning to our history of the proceedings of the General Committee.

If his book does not recommend itself by its polished style, deep erudition, or rhetorical flights, he thinks that it possesses qualities that are more valuable in such a work. Candour and simplicity in church history, appear to the author, properties of primary importance. He has faithfully recorded the foibles and failures, as well as the virtues and praises, of his own people.

The documents which were before him, were of various sorts. Some were printed, and, of course, rested upon the veracity of the author. Some were old manuscripts gathered from the papers of persons long since dead; and which might have been hastily composed, their authors not expecting their publication, and not being alive to give explanations. Some, and indeed, many were furnished by living characters, who doubtless always gave as correct information as they possessed. But from the contradictory statements of the same facts by different persons, there must have

been many mistakes. The compiler always strove to select from the various statements, that which seemed most likely to be correct; yet without doubt he will be found sometimes to have been mistaken. His errors, however, if there are any, are chiefly if not wholly, respecting matters of secondary importance. To make a satisfactory selection was often extremely difficult indeed; yet the arrangements of materials received, was not the most arduous part. An unaccountable backwardness of many, to furnish, in any way, the information possessed, rendered the task almost impracticable. All these difficulties considered, with many that cannot be expressed, the reader will do no more than justice to say, that however incorrect the work may be in some of its parts, and however deficient in others, it is still a performance that must have cost no inconsiderable labour and solicitude.

Whilst he expresses regret, at the backwardness of some, he feels a more than commensurate pleasure, in expressing his gratitude for the laudable forwardness of others. These are so numerous and so deserving, that he is fearful, whilst he cannot insert the names of ~~all~~ the sensibility of others might be wounded, if he should mention those of the *Rev. William Mason* of Culpeper, *John Pindexter* of Louisa, *A. Waller* of Spotsylvania, *William Brame* of Richmond, *Benjamin Watkins* of Powhatan, *William Richard* of Mecklenburg, *Josiah Osburne* and *John Alderson* of Greenbrie, *William Howard* of Montgomery, *John Jenkins* of Pittsylvania, *Jeremiah Moore* of Fairfax, and *Mr. Thomas Buck* of Frederick. From these a prompt and friendly aid was afforded: and, indeed, some exerted themselves above what could have been expected. From the histories of the Kehukee and Ketocton Associations, extracts have been made as to Portsmouth and Ketocton. To their authors he must therefore express his obligations. Mr. Leland's Virginia Chronicle, his manuscript collection, &c. were the more valuable, because they furnished matter which could not have been easily, if at all, obtained elsewhere.

There are some parts of the history, such as treat on churches, &c. which will not be interesting to many readers; yet to others, these places may be the most desirable.

The tables prefixed to each Association, are designed to exhibit a compendious view of the churches of which they are composed.

In treating on churches and associations, opportunities are often taken, of delineating some living characters, and, thereby, to hold up for imitation the praiseworthy properties of good men: and, in a few instances, by exhibiting the true characters of bad ones, a warning is offered to the unwary.

Finally, whatever may be the censures of bigots and cynics,

the author hopes for the candid and liberal support of the friends of truth and piety; and for these, his book is particularly designed.

Notwithstanding great pains have been taken to prevent it, some grammatical and some typographical errors have imperceptibly crept into this work. These, it is believed, seldom, if ever, affect the sense.

RECOMMENDATORY LETTER.

THE following letter from Rev. Andrew Broaddus, Caroline, and Peter Nelson, esq. Professor of Wingfield Academy, Hanover, is so gratifying to the feelings of the author, that he cannot withhold from publication, the recommendation of men so capable of judging of the merits of such a work.

Dear Sir,

August 30th, 1810.

The examination of your "History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia," has indeed been to us a pleasing task: not merely as it has afforded us an opportunity of complying with the requisition of a friendship we highly value; but, from the manner in which the compilation is executed.

We are far from intending the complimentary style of recommendation, when we say, that we consider this a truly valuable and well executed work. The style is perspicuous, concise, and well adapted to history; the arrangement clear, and happily calculated to prevent confusion; and the matter it contains highly important and interesting to every friend of truth and piety.

We cannot conclude without congratulating *you*, on the completion of an undertaking so laborious as this has been, and the *public*, on the acquisition of a work, calculated in a considerable degree, to gratify the curious and inform the inquisitive; as well as to promote the cause of true religion.

Accept the assurances of our friendship and esteem.

Peter Nelson,
Andrew Broaddus.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Origin of the Separate Baptists.

THE Baptists of Virginia originated from three sources. The first were emigrants from England, who about the year 1714, settled in the south east parts of the state.

About 1743, another party came from Maryland, and formed a settlement in the north west.

Each of these will be treated of in their proper places.

A third party, from New England, having acted the most distinguished part, first demands our attention.

By the preaching of Mr. Whitefield thro' New-England, a great work of God broke out in that country, distinguished by the name of the *New-light-stir*. All who joined in it were called *Newlights*. Many preachers of the established order, became active in the work.... Their success was so great, that numbers of the parish clergy, who were opposed to the revival, were apprehensive that they should be deserted by all their hearers. They therefore not only refused them the use of their meeting houses, but actually procured the passage of a law to confine all preachers to their own parishes.... This opposition did not effect the intended object.... The hearts of the people being touched by a heavenly flame, could no longer relish the dry parish service, conducted, for the most part, as they thought, by a set of graceless mercenaries.

The *New-light-stir* being extensive, a great number were converted to the Lord.... These, conceiving that the parish congregations, a few excepted, were far from the purity of the gospel, determined to form a society to themselves. Accordingly they embodied many churches.... Into these none were admitted, who did not profess vital religion. Having thus separated themselves from the established churches, they were denominated *Separates*. Their church government,

was entirely upon the plan of the *Independents*, the power being in the hands of the church. 'They permitted unlearned men to preach, provided they manifested such gifts as indicated future usefulness. 'They were *Pedo-baptists* in principle, but did not reject any of their members, who chose to submit to believer's baptism.

The *Separates* first took their rise, or rather their name, about the year 1744. 'They increased very fast for several years. About a year after they were organized into a distinct society, they were joined by Shubal Stearns, who becoming a preacher, laboured among them until 1751, when forming acquaintance with some of the Baptists, he was convinced of the duty of believer's baptism. Being a good man, to know his duty, was sufficient to induce him to perform it. 'The same year in which he was baptised he was ordained, and took the pastoral care of a church. Mr. Stearns and most of the *Separates*, had strong faith in the immediate teachings of the spirit. 'They believed that to those who sought him earnestly, God often gave evident tokens of his will. 'That such indications of the divine pleasure, partaking of the nature of inspiration, were above, tho' not contrary to reason, and that following these, still leaning in every step, upon the same wisdom and power by which they were first actuated, they would inevitably be led, to the accomplishment of the two great objects of a christian's life, the glory of God and the salvation of men. Mr. Stearns, listening to some of these instructions of Heaven, conceived himself called upon by the Almighty, to move far to the westward, to execute a great and extensive work. Incited by his impressions, in the year 1754, he and a few of his members took their leave of N. England. 'They halted first at Opeckon, in Berkeley county, Virginia, where he found a Baptist church under the care of the Rev. John Garrard,* who met him kindly. Here also he met his brother in law, the

* See our biography of D. Marshall.

Rev. Daniel Marshall, just returned from his mission among the Indians, and who after his arrival at this place had become a Baptist.† They joined companies and settled for a while on Cacapon in Hampshire county, about 30 miles from Winchester. Here, not meeting with his expected success, he felt restless. Some of his friends had moved to North Carolina, he received letters from these, informing him, that preaching was greatly desired by the people of that country: That in some instances they had rode 40 miles to hear one sermon. He and his party once more got under way, and travelling about 200 miles came to Sandy Creek, in Guilford county, N. Carolina. Here he took up his permanent residence. Soon after his arrival, viz. Nov. 22, 1755, he and his companions, to the number of 16, were constituted into a church called *Sandy Creek*, and to which Mr. Stearns was appointed pastor. In this little church in the wilderness, there were, besides the pastor, two other preachers, viz. Joseph Breed and Daniel Marshall, neither of whom was ordained.

Thus organized, they began their work, kindling a fire which soon began to burn brightly indeed, spreading in a few years over Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia.

The subsequent events, seem completely to have verified Mr. Stearns's impressions, concerning a great work of God in the West.

CHAPTER II.

From their final settlement in North Carolina until the commencement of legal persecution.

THE natives round about this little colony of Baptists, altho' brought up in the christian religion, were grossly ignorant of its essential principles. Having the form of godliness, they knew nothing of its power.

The doctrine of Mr. Stearns and his party was consequently quite strange. To be born again, appeared

† See our history of Ketocton association.

to them as absurd as it did to the Jewish doctor, when he asked, if he must enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born again. Having always supposed that religion consisted in nothing more than the practise of its outward duties, they could not comprehend how it should be necessary to feel conviction and conversion: But to be able to ascertain the time and place of one's conversion was, in their estimation, wonderful indeed—These points were all strenuously contended for by the new preachers. But their manner of preaching was, if possible, much more novel than their doctrines. The *Separates* in N. England had acquired a very warm and pathetic address, accompanied by strong gestures and a singular tone of voice. Being often deeply affected themselves while preaching, correspondent affections were felt by their pious hearers, which were frequently expressed by tears, trembling, screams, shouts and acclamations. All these they brought with them into their new habitation. The people were greatly astonished having never seen things in this wise before. Many mocked, but the power of God attending them, many also trembled. In process of time some of the natives became converts, and bowed obedience to the Redeemer's sceptre. These, uniting their labours with the chosen band, a powerful and extensive work broke out.—From 16, *Sandy Creek Church* soon swelled to 606 members; so mightily grew the work of God!

Daniel Marshall, tho' not possessed of great talents, was indefatigable in his endeavours. He sallied out into the adjacent neighbourhoods, and planted the Redeemer's standard in many of the strong holds of Satan. At Abbot's creek, about 30 miles from Sandy creek, the gospel prospered so largely, that they petitioned the mother church for a constitution, and for the ordination of Mr. Marshall as their pastor. The church was constituted, Mr. Marshall accepted the call, and went to live among them. His ordination, however, was a matter of some difficulty. It required a

plurality of elders to constitute a presbytery; Mr. Stearns was the only ordained minister among them. In this dilemma, they were informed, that there were some regular Baptist preachers living on Pedee. To one of these Mr. Stearns applied, and requested him to assist him in the ordination of Mr. Marshall.— This request he sternly refused, declaring that he held no fellowship with Stearns's party: that he believed them to be a disorderly set: suffering women to pray in public, and permitting every ignorant man to preach that chose: that they encouraged noise and confusion in their meetings. Application was then made to Mr. Henry Ledbetter, who lived somewhere in the southern states, and who was a brother-in-law of Mr. Marshall. He and Mr. Stearns ordained Mr. Marshall to the care of this new church. The work of grace continued to spread, and several preachers were raised in North Carolina. Among others, was James Read, who was afterwards very successful in Virginia. When he first began to preach he was entirely illiterate, not knowing how to read or write. His wife became his instructor, and he soon acquired learning sufficient to enable him to read the scriptures.

Into the parts of Virginia, adjacent to the residence of this religious colony, the gospel had been quickly carried by Mr. Marshall. He had baptised several in some of his first visits. Among them was Dutton Lane, who shortly after his baptism, began to preach—a revival succeeded, and Mr. Marshall at one time baptised 42 persons. In August 1760, a church was constituted under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dutton Lane. This was the first Separate Baptist Church in Virginia, and, in some sense, the mother of all the rest. The church prospered under the ministry of Mr. Lane, aided by the occasional visits of Mr. Marshall and Mr. Stearns. They endured much persecution, but God prospered them, and delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies.

Soon after Mr. Lane's conversion, the power of God

was effectual in the conversion of Samuel Harriss, a man of great distinction in those parts. Besides being the burgess of the county, and colonel of the militia, he held several other offices. Upon being honoured of God, he laid aside all worldly honours, and became a labourer in the Lord's vineyard. In 1759, he was ordained a ruling elder. From the time of the commencement of his ministry for about 7 years, his labours were devoted chiefly to his own and the adjacent counties. Being often with Mr. Marshall in his ministerial journies, he caught the zeal, diligence, and indeed the manners of Marshall. His labours were crowned with the blessing of heaven wherever he went. Stearns, tho' not as laborious as Marshall, was not idle. He seems to have possessed the talent of arranging the materials when collected. He understood well discipline and church governments.

Having now constituted several churches, and there being some others that exercised the rights of churches, tho' not formally organized, Mr. Stearns conceived that an association composed of delegates from all these, would have a tendency to impart stability, regularity, and uniformity to the whole. For this prudent purpose, he visited each church and congregation, and explaining the contemplated plan, induced them all to send delegates to his meeting house the ensuing January, which was in the year 1760. Their regulations and proceedings may be seen in our account of the General Association. Here it may suffice to observe, that thro' these meetings, the gospel was carried into many new places, where the fame of the Baptists had previously spread; for great crowds attending from distant parts, mostly through curiosity, many became enamoured with these extraordinary people, and petitioned the association to send preachers into their neighbourhoods. These petitions were readily granted, and the preachers as readily complied with the appointments. Thus the associations became the medium of propagating the gospel in new and dark

places. They were instrumental in another way, in advancing truth. When assembled, their chief employment was preaching, exhortation, singing, and conversing about their various exertions in the Redeemer's service, and the attendant success. These things so enflamed the hearts of the ministers, that they would leave the association, with a zeal and courage, which no obstacles could impede.

Mr. Marshall's impressions led him to travel farther south. Of his success in those quarters, see some account in his biography.

Mr. Harriss was destined of God to labour more extensively in Virginia, than in any other state. Having done much good in the circumjacent parts, the time had now arrived for him to lengthen his cords. In January, 1765, Allen Wyley,* an inhabitant of Culpeper, and who had been baptised by David Thomas, hearing of the *Separate Baptist preachers*, travelled from Culpeper to Pittsylvania, in order to get one or more of them to come and preach in Culpeper. He travelled on, scarcely knowing whither he went. An unseen hand directed his course. He providentially fell in with one of Mr. Harriss's meeting. When he came into the meeting house, Mr. H. fixed his eyes upon him, being impressed previously that he had some extraordinary message. He asked him whence he came, &c. Mr. W. told him his errand. Upon which, after some deliberation, believing him to be sent of God, Mr. Harriss agreed to go. Taking three days to prepare, he started with Wyley, having no meetings on the way, yet exhorting and praying at every house where he went.

Arriving in Culpeper, his first meeting was at Wyley's own house. He preached the first day without interruption, and appointed for the next. He the next day began to preach, but the opposers immediately raised violent opposition, appearing with whips,

* Mr. Wyley is now living, and furnished from under his own hand the above account. He has maintained ever since an upright character, as a zealous and pious professor.

sticks, clubs, &c. so as to hinder his labours; in consequence of which he went that night over to Orange county, and preached with much effect. He continued many days preaching from place to place, attended by great crowds, and followed throughout his meetings by several persons who had been either lately converted, or seriously awakened, under the ministry of the *Regular Baptists*, and also by many who had been alarmed by his own labours. When Mr. Harriss left them he exhorted them to be stedfast, and advised some in whom he discovered talents, to commence the exercise of their gifts, and to hold meetings among themselves. In this ministerial journey, Mr. Harriss sowed many good seed, yielding afterwards great increase. The young converts took his advice, and began to hold meetings every Sabbath, and almost every night in the week, taking a tobacco house for their meeting house. After proceeding in this way for some time, they applied to Mr. David Thomas, who lived somewhere north of the Rappahannock, to come and preach for them, and teach them the ways of God more perfectly; he came, but in his preaching expressed some disapprobation of the preaching of such weak and illiterate persons.* This was like throwing cold water upon their flaming zeal; they took umbrage, and resolved to send once more for Mr. Harriss. Sometime in the year 1766, and a short time after Mr. Thomas's preaching, three of the party, viz: Elijah Craig and two others, travelled to Mr. Harriss's house, in order to procure his services in Orange and the adjacent parts, to preach and baptize the new converts. They found to their surprise that he had not been ordained to the administration of the ordinances. To remedy this inconvenience, he carried them about 60 miles into North Carolina to get James Read, who was ordained.

There is something singular in the exercises of Mr. Read about this time. He was impressed with an

* Mr. Thomas was a man of extensive learning.

opinion that he had frequent teachings from God; and indeed from the account given by himself, we must either doubt his veracity, or admit that his impressions were supernatural.* He declares that respecting his preaching in Virginia, for many weeks, he had no rest in his spirit. Asleep or awake he felt his soul earnestly impressed with strong desires to come to Virginia to preach the gospel. In his dreams he thought that God would often shew him large congregations of Virginians assembled to hear preaching. He was sometimes heard by his family to cry out in his sleep, *O Virginia, Virginia, Virginia*. Mr. Graves, a member of his church, a good man, discovering his anxiety, and believing his impressions to be from God, offered to accompany him. Just as they were fixing to come off, Mr. Harriſs and the three messengers mentioned above, came for him to go with them.. The circumstances so much resemble Peters' call from Joppa to Cæsarea, that we can hardly for a moment hesitate, in placing implicit confidence, in its being a contrivance of divine wisdom.

Mr. Read agreed to go, without much hesitation.... One of the messengers from Spottsylvania went on to appoint meetings on the way. The two preachers, after filling up some appointments in their own parts, pursued their contemplated journey, accompanied by Mr. Graves and the other two. In about a fortnight they arrived in Orange, within the bounds of Blue Run church, as it now stands. When they came in sight, and saw a very large congregation, they were greatly affected. After a few minutes of prayer and reflection, they recovered their courage, and entered upon their great work. They preached with much effect on that day. The next day they preached at Elijah Craig's, where a vast croud attended. D. Thomas and John Garrard, both preachers of the Regular Order, were at this meeting. The ministers on both sides seemed desirous to unite, but the people were

* In a manuscript furnished from his own hand.

against it; the larger part siding with the *Separates*. As they could not unite, both parties held meetings the next day, being Sabbath, but a small distance from each other. Baptism was administered by both. These things widened the breach. Messrs. Read and Harris, however, continued their ministrations. Mr. Read baptized 19 the first day, and more on the days following. They went thro' Spottsylvania into the upper parts of Caroline, Hanover and Goochland, sowing the seeds of grace and peace in many places. So much were they inspirited by these meetings, that they made appointments to come again the next year. In their second visit, they were accompanied by the Rev. Dutton Lane, who, assisted them in constituting and organizing, the first Separate Baptist Church, between Rappahannock and James River. This took place on the 20th of November, 1767. The church was called *Upper Spottsylvania*, and consisted of twenty-five members, including all the *Separate Baptists* North of James River. This was a mother to many other churches.

Read and Harris continued to visit these parts for about three years, with wonderful effect. In one of their visits, they baptized 75 at one time, and in the course of one of their journies, which generally lasted several weeks, they baptized upwards of 200. It was not uncommon, at their great meetings, for many hundreds of men to camp on the ground, in order to be present the next day. The night-meetings, thro' the great work of God, continued very late; the ministers would scarcely have an opportunity to sleep; sometimes the floor would be covered with persons, struck down under conviction for sin. It frequently happened that, when they would retire to rest at a late hour, they would be under the necessity of arising again, thro' the earnest cries of the penitent: there were instances of persons travelling more than one hundred miles to one of these meetings; to go forty or fifty was not uncommon.

On account of the great increase of members, thro' the labours of Messrs. Read and Harriſs, aided by a number of young preachers, it was found neceſſary to conſtitute ſeveral other churches. Accordingly on the 2d day of Dec. 1769, *Lower Spottſylvania Church*, was conſtituted, with 154 members, who choſe John Waller for paſtor: he was conſecrated to this office June 2d, 1770. Lewis Craig was conſecrated paſtor to the mother church, Nov. 1770. *Blue Run Church* was conſtituted Dec. 4th, 1769, and chooſing Elijah Craig for their paſtor, he was conſecrated May 1771.*

Read and Harriſs, particularly the latter, were men of great zeal and indefatigable diligence and perfeverance, in their maſter's cauſe: their ſpirit was caught by many of the young prophets, in Orange and Spottſylvania. Lewis and Elijah Craig, John Waller, James Childs, John Burrus, &c. animated by an ardent deſire for the advancement of their maſter's kingdom, ſallied forth in every direction, ſpreading the tidings of peace and ſalvation, wherever they went. Moſt of them illiterate, yet illumined by the wiſdom from above, they would defend and maintain the cauſe of truth, againſt the arguments of the moſt profound. Without viſible ſword or buckler, they moved on ſteady to their purpoſe, undiſmayed by the terrific hoſts of Satan, backed by the ſtrong arm of civil authority. Magiſtrates and mobs, prieſts and ſheriffs, courts and priſons, all vainly combined to divert them from their object: He that was for them, was greater than all that were againſt them; they found, that

“ *Prisons would palaces prove,*

“ *If Jesus would dwell with them there.”*

There was an eſtabliſhed religion: the Nebuchadnezzars of the age, required all men to bow down to this golden image: theſe Hebrew children reſuſed,

* Theſe foregoing accounts, were taken from manuſcripts, received from Mr. John Leland, J. Waller, E. Craig, James Read, &c

and were cast into the burning fiery furnace of persecution : the Son of God walked with them there, to the utter dismay of their enemies. The decree finally went forth, that none should be any more forced, to worship the golden image. The establishment was overturned.

Their labours were not limited to their own counties. In Goochland, Messrs. Harriſs and Read, had baptized ſeveral ; among whom was Reuben Ford, who had profeſſed vital faith about 7 years before, under the miniſtry of the renowned Whitefield and Davis. Mr. Ford was baptized in the year 1769, by James Read.

Theſe plants were watered by the labours of the Spottſylvania preachers, particularly J. Waller, who, early in his viſits to Goochland, baptized Wm. Webber and Joſeph Anthony, who, with Reuben Ford, had been exhorting, &c. previous to their being baptized. By the united labours of theſe ſeveral ſervants of God, the work of godlineſs progreſſed, in Goochland and round about. The conqueſts of Jeſus, differ from thoſe of the kings of the earth : they aim to deſtroy their enemies : he turns enemies to friends : he arreſts an infuriated Saul from the ranks of Satan, and makes him an inſpired advocate for that cauſe which he once deſtroyed—So it fared with all theſe young preachers. They were no ſooner captivated by the king of Zion, than they immediately began to fight under his banner ; their ſucceſs was commensurate with their diligence ; many believed and were baptized in Goochland ; inſomuch, that they thought themſelves ripe for an independent government, and were accordingly conſtituted as a church, towards the laſt of the year 1771.—It was called *Goochland Church*, and contained about ſeventy-five members. This was the mother church of thoſe parts, for, from it have been ſince conſtituted ſeveral others. *Dover* and *Licking-hole*, were both, ſhortly after, taken from Goochland church.—Wm. Webber became paſtor of Dover, which office

he held until his death in 1808. Reuben Ford administered the word and ordinances, to Goochland and Licking-hole.

The spread of the gospel is somewhat like the spread of fire, It does not in all cases advance regularly ; but a spark being struck out, flies off and begins a new flame at a distance. In this manner did the gospel take its rise in the counties of Middlesex, Essex and the adjacent counties. One Wm. Mullin, afterwards an useful preacher, had moved from Middlesex and settled in the county of Amelia. When the gospel reached Amelia, Mr. Mullin embraced the truth.— Coming afterwards, in 1769, on a visit to his relations in Middlesex and Essex, by arguments, drawn from the scripture, he convinced his brother John, and his brother-in-law James Greenwood, with several others, of the necessity of being born again. Of these, some found peace in believing, before they ever heard the gospel publicly preached. November 1770, John Waller and John Burrus, came down and preached in Middlesex. They continued preaching at, and near the same place, for three days; great crowds came out: Waller baptized five. Persecution began to rage. Some said they were deceivers; others that they were good men. On the second day, a magistrate attempted to pull Waller off the stage, but the clergyman of the parish prevented it. The next day, a man threw a stone at Waller while he was preaching; the stone missed Waller and struck a friend of the man that threw it. James Greenwood and others now began to hold public meetings, by day and by night.... Much good was done by them; many believed, and only waited an opportunity to be baptized, there being no ordained preacher nearer than Spottsylvania.

In the meantime, the labourers had not been idle in that part of the vineyard South of James River. The two Murphies, *viz*: Wm. and Joseph, aided by the indefatigable S. Harris, had carried the gospel into some of the counties above Pittsylvania, where Rob't. Stock-

ton and some other preachers, were raised. S. Harris, J. Read, Jeremiah Walker, &c. had proclaimed the tidings of peace in Halifax, Charlotte, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Amelia, and almost all the counties above Richmond, on the South side of the river. In these gatherings, there were many useful and several eminent ministers of the gospel brought in, viz: John Williams, John King, James Shelburne, Henry Lester, with some others. The gospel was first carried here, nearly as it was into Culpeper and Spottsylvania, viz: In consequence of a special message to the preachers from some of the inhabitants.* They constituted the first church in 1769, with about 40 members, which was called *Nottoway*. Mr. Walker soon moved, and took the pastoral charge of them; he had been preaching sometime before this, in N. Carolina, his native state; he now moved to Virginia, and for several years acted a conspicuous part in the concerns of the Virginia Baptists.†

CHAPTER III.

From the commencement of Legal Persecution, until the Abolition of the Established Church.

WHEN the Baptists first appeared in N. Carolina and Virginia, they were viewed, by men in power, as beneath their notice; none, said they, but the weak and wicked join them; let them alone, they will soon fall out among themselves, and come to nothing. In some places this maxim was adhered to, and persecution, in a legal shape, was never seen. But in many others, alarmed by the rapid increase of the Baptists, the men in power, strained every penal law in the Virginia code, to obtain ways and means, to put down these disturbers of the peace, as they were now called.

It seems by no means certain, that any law in force in Virginia, authorised the imprisonment of any per-

* See further account in the History of the Middle District Association, Nottoway Church. † See his Biography.

son for preaching. The law for the preservation of peace, however, was so interpreted as to answer this purpose; and, accordingly, whenever the preachers were apprehended, it was done by a peace warrant.

The first instance of actual imprisonment, we believe, that ever took place in Virginia, was in the county of Spottsylvania. On the 4th. of June, 1768, John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, &c. were seized by the sheriff, and haled before three magistrates, who stood in the meeting house yard, and who bound them in the penalty of one thousand pounds, to appear at court two days after. At court they were arraigned as disturbers of the peace; on their trial, they were vehemently accused, by a certain lawyer, who said to the court, "May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace, they cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of scripture down his throat." Mr. Waller made his own, and his brethren's defence so ingeniously, that they were somewhat puzzled to know how to dispose of them. They offered to release them, if they would promise to preach no more in the county, for a year and a day. This they refused; and, therefore, were sent into close jail. As they were moving on, from the court-house to the prison, thro' the streets of Fredericksburg, they sung the hymn

"Broad is the road that leads to death," &c.

This had an awful appearance. After four weeks confinement, Lewis Craig was released from prison, and immediately went down to Williamsburg, to get a release for his companions. He waited on the deputy-governor, the Hon. John Blair, stated the case before him, and received the following letter, directed to the King's attorney, in Spottsylvania:

"SIR,—I lately received a letter, signed by a good number of worthy gentlemen, who are not here, complaining of the Baptists; the particulars of their misbehaviour are not told, any further than their running into private houses, and making dissensions. Mr. Craig and Mr. Benjamin Waller are now with me, and deny the charge: they tell me they are willing to take the oaths, as others have: I told them I had consulted the attorney-general, who is of opinion, that the general court only have a right to grant licences, and therefore I referred them to the court; but, on their application to the attorney ge-

neral, they brought me his letter, advising me to write to you. That their petition was a matter of right, and that you may not molest these conscientious people, so long as they behave themselves in a manner becoming pious christians, and in obedience to the laws, till the court, when they intend to apply for license, and when the gentlemen, who complain, may make their objections, and be heard. The act of toleration (it being found by experience, that persecuting dissenters, increases their numbers,) has given them a right to apply, in a proper manner, for licensed houses, for the worship of God, according to their consciences; and I persuade myself, the gentlemen will quietly overlook their meetings, till the Court. I am told, they administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, near the manner we do, and, differ in nothing from our church, but in that of Baptism, and their renewing the ancient discipline; by which, they have reformed some sinners, and brought them to be truly penitent: Nay, if a man of theirs is idle, and neglects to labour, and provide for his family as he ought, he incurs their censures, which have had good effects. If this be their behaviour, it were to be wished, we had some of it among us: But, at least, I hope, all may remain quiet, till the Court.

"I am, with great respects to the gentlemen, Sir,

"Your humble servant,

JOHN BLAIR.

"Williamsburg, July 16, 1768."

When the letter came to the attorney, he would have nothing to say in the affair. Waller, and the others, continued in jail 43 days, and were then discharged, without any conditions. While in prison, they constantly preached thro' the grates. The mob without, used every exertion to prevent the people from hearing, but to little purpose. Many heard indeed, upon whom the word was in power and demonstration.

After their discharge, which was a kind of triumph, Waller, Craig, and their compeers in the ministry, resumed their labours, with redoubled vigour, gathering fortitude from their late sufferings; thanking God that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ and his gospel. Day and night, and indeed almost every day and night, they held meetings in their own and the adjacent neighbourhoods. The spread of the gospel, and of Baptist principles, was equal to all their exertions; insomuch, that in very few sections of Virginia, did the Baptist cause appear more formidable to its enemies, and more consoling to its friends, than in Spottsylvania; and we may add, so it is at this day.

We have already observed the spread of the gospel in the county of Goochland, and, that certain promising young preachers, were thrust into the work. Animated, as they were, with strong desires for the welfare

of souls, they could not restrain themselves within the limits of one county. In December 1770, Messrs. Wm. Webber and Joseph Anthony, two zealous young preachers, passed James River, into Chesterfield, having been previously invited by some of the inhabitants. They, however, met with rigid treatment; the magistrates, finding that many were turning to righteousness, (to madness, as they would have it,) and, that these young labourers, were likely to do them much harm, issued warrants, and had them apprehended and cast into prison. The court, requiring them to bind themselves to do, what they could not, in conscience; comply with, they continued in jail until the March following. While in prison; they did much execution, by preaching through the grates; many people attended their ministry, and many professed faith, by virtue of the labours of these, the Lord's persecuted servants. This was the beginning of God's work in the county of Chesterfield; no county ever extended its opposition, and persecution to the Baptists, farther than this; and yet, in few counties, have Baptist principles prevailed more extensively, than in Chesterfield.*

When Webber and Anthony were let go, they returned to Goochland, to their own company, and resumed their great work; Mr. Webber, however, enjoyed his liberty only a few months; he consented to travel with John Waller, on a course of meetings, to Middlesex; they arrived in the upper end of Middlesex on the 10th of August, 1771: they came; but soon found there was no chance to proceed in their work; while Wm. Webber was preaching from these words, "*Shew me thy faith, without thy works, and I will shew you my faith, by my works,*" a magistrate pushed up, and drew back his club, with a design to knock Webber down; some person behind him, caught the club, and prevented the mischief; having a warrant to apprehend all who preached; and being backed by two sheriffs, the parson and a posse, he seized

* See Middle District Association, Chesterfield Church.

Wm. Webber, John Waller, James Greenwood and Robert Ware. On the same day, Thos. Waford, who had travelled from the upper country with the preachers, though no preacher himself, was severely beaten by one of the persecutors, with a whip, the scar of which, he will probably carry to his grave; he, with the four above named preachers, were tried by James Montague. They first searched their saddlebags, to find treasonable papers; finding none, they proceeded to trial, taking them one by one, into private rooms, proposing to them, to give bond and security not to preach in the county again. Each of them expressly refused; Waford was discharged, not being a preacher; the other four were ordered to prison, and being conducted by two sheriffs, they were safely lodged in close jail that night, about 9 o'clock. The prison swarmed with fleas; they borrowed a candle of the jailer; and, having sung the praises of that Redeemer, whose cross they bore, and from whose hands they expected a crown in the end; having returned thanks that it was a prison, and not hell that they were in; praying for themselves, their friends, their enemies and persecutors, they laid down to sleep. The next day, being Sunday, many of their friends came to see them, and were admitted into the prison; James Greenwood preached to them. They were well supplied by their friends with the necessities and comforts for living, which, added to the sense of divine goodness that they enjoyed, they had no unpleasant season. They gave notice that they would preach every Wednesday and Sunday; many came to hear them, insomuch, that their enemies began to be enraged, and would frequently beat a drum, while they were preaching.

On Monday the 24th, being court day, they were carried to the court-house to be tried. A guard attended them, as if they had been criminals. They were not allowed to speak for themselves, but peremptorily required to give bond and security for good be-

haviour, and, not to preach in the county again for one year: these terms they expressly refused, and were remanded to prison, and orders given that they should be fed on bread and water; accordingly, the next day they had nothing else, and not enough of bread; so it continued for four days, until the brethren and friends found it out; after that, they were furnished so plentifully, that they bestowed in bounty, upon the poor inhabitants of the town. On September the 10th, they were allowed the prison bounds, by which they were much relieved; yet they were frequently under the necessity of resorting to the jail, to avoid the rage of persecutors: the Lord daily opened the hearts of the people; the rich sent many presents, things calculated to nourish them in their sufferings, and to alleviate their sorrows. Wm. Webber fell sick; this excited the sympathy of their friends in a higher degree: they paid him great attention. The persecutors found that the imprisonment of the preachers, tended rather to the furtherance of the gospel. They preached regularly in prison; crowds attended; the preaching seemed to have double weight when coming from the jail: many viewed it with superstitious reverence, so that their enemies became desirous to be rid of them. Accordingly, on the 26th day of September, after having been 30 days in close confinement, and 16 days in the bounds, they were liberated, upon giving a bond for good behaviour.

The rage of persecutors had in no wise abated; they seemed, sometimes, to strive to treat the Baptists and their worship, with as much rudeness and indecency, as was possible. They often insulted the preacher in time of service, and would ride into the water, and make sport, when they administered Baptism: they frequently fabricated and spread, the most groundless reports, which were injurious to the characters of the Baptists. When any Baptist fell into any improper conduct, it was always exaggerated to the utmost extent. On one occasion, when Robert Ware was

preaching, there came one Davis and one Kemp, two sons of Belial, and stood before him with a bottle, and drank, offering the bottle to him, cursing him.— As soon as he closed his service, they drew out a pack of cards, and began to play on the stage where he had been standing, wishing him to reprove them, that they might beat him.* Notwithstanding these severe oppositions, the word of the Lord grew, and multiplied greatly. Young preachers were ordained, and churches constituted: the first of which, was *Lower King & Queen Church*, constituted October 17, 1772, with 17 members, and on the 11th of February following, Robert Ware was consecrated as pastor. *Glebe Landing Church*, was also constituted at the same time, and James Greenwood ordained a lay-elder. *Exol and Piscataway Churches*, were constituted in no great while after this. These new churches, filled with young and inexperienced members, were visited frequently by J. Waller, accompanied sometimes by one, and sometimes another, of the preachers of his own vicinity: his ministrations were, on the one hand, exceeding salutary and comfortable to his friends, but, on the other, highly displeasing to the enemies of the Baptists. They viewed Waller, as the ring leader of all the confusion and disturbance, that had befallen them. Great congregations of people attended the Baptist meetings, while very few went to the parish churches. The zealots for the old order were greatly embarrassed: *If, say they, we permit them to go on, our Church must come to nothing, and yet, if we punish them, as far as we can stretch the law, it seems not to deter them; for they preach through prison windows, in spite of our endeavours to prevent it.* Sometimes the rector of the parish, would give notice, that, on a certain day, *he would prove the Baptists to be deceivers, and their doctrines false.* The attempt was often made, but they uniformly injured their own

* It is worthy of note, that these two men both died soon after, ravingly distracted, each accusing the other of leading him into so detestable a crime.

cause : their arguments were, generally, drawn from the extravagancies of the German Anabaptists. To this, the Baptists, in a word replied ; *that they disclaimed all connection with the Anabaptists, and felt themselves no more responsible for their irregularities, than the Episcopalians could feel for the fooleries of the Papists : that the Bible was the criterion ; by that, they were willing to stand or fall.* Not unfrequently, their leading men would attend the Baptist meetings, and would enter into arguments with the preachers : they insisted, that their church was the oldest, and consequently the best : that their ministers were learned men, and consequently most competent to interpret scripture : that the better sort, and well informed, adhered to them, whilst none, or scarcely any except the lower order, followed the Baptists : that they were all in peace and friendship before the coming of the Baptists ; but now, their houses and neighbourhoods were filled with religious disputes : that the Baptists were false prophets, who were to come in sheep's clothing.

To these arguments, Waller and the other preachers, boldly and readily replied : that if they were wolves in sheep clothing, and their opponents were the true sheep, it was quite unaccountable that they were persecuted, and cast into prison : it was well known that wolves would destroy sheep, but never, until then, that sheep would prey upon wolves : that their coming, might indeed interrupt their peace ; but certainly if it did, it must be a false peace, bordering on destruction ; and, to rouse them from such lethargy, was like waking a man whose house was burning over him : that the effects of their coming were similar to those foretold by Christ, as arising from the propagation of his word, namely, “ *that there should be five in one house, three against two, and two against three :*” that, if the higher ranks in society, did not countenance them, it was no more than what befel their master, and his inspired apostles : that

rich men in every generation, with some few exceptions, were enemies to a pure gospel: but that God had declared, that he had chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith: that, it was true, that most of their preachers were unlearned, yet that they had evidences that they were called to the ministry, by the will of God: that this, was the most essential qualification of a minister, the want of which, all the learning of all the schools, could not supply.

The Baptist preachers would often retort their own inconsistencies upon them: that while they professed to be Christians, they indulged themselves in the violation of most of the Christian precepts: that their communion was often polluted, by the admission of known drunkards, gamesters, swearers, and revellers: that even their clergy, learned as they were, had never learned the most essential doctrine of revelation, the indispensable necessity of the new birth, or *being born again*: that their public discourses, were nothing more than moral addresses, such as a pagan philosopher, unassisted by the bible, could have composed.

Foiled in their arguments, and galled by the reproaches cast upon them, which doubtless were often done with too much acrimony, they again resorted to civil power. In August 1772, James Greenwood and Wm. Loyal were preaching, not far from the place where *Bruington Meeting House* now stands, in the county of King & Queen, when they were seized by virtue of a warrant, and immediately conveyed to prison. After the first day and night, they were allowed the bounds. Having continued in prison sixteen days, *i. e.* until court, they were discharged, upon giving bond merely for good behaviour. At this season they received the most unbounded kindness from Mr. Harwood the jailer, and his lady. They preached regularly while in prison, and to much purpose.

On March 13th, 1774, the day on which Piscataway Church was constituted, a warrant was issued to apprehend all the Baptist preachers that were at meet-

ing. Accordingly, John Waller, John Schackleford, Robert Ware and Ivison Lewis, were taken and carried before a magistrate. Ivison Lewis was dismissed, not having preached in the county; the other four were sent to prison. It appears from Mr. Waller's journals, which we have before us, that while in prison, God permitted them to pass through divers and fiery trials; their minds, for a season, being greatly harassed by the enemy of souls. They however, from first to last of their imprisonment, preached twice a week, gave much godly advice to such as came to visit them, read a great deal, and prayed almost without ceasing. In their stated devotion, morning, noon, and night, they were often joined by others. They continued in close confinement from the 13th to the 21st of March, which was court day; being brought to trial, they were required to give bond and security for their good behavior for 12 months, or go back to prison. Ware and Shackleford gave bond and went home; Waller being always doubtful of the propriety of giving any bond whatever, determined to go back to jail.

The trials of this man of God were now greater than ever. Deserted by his brethren, scoffed and persecuted by his enemies, locked up with a set of drunken, profane wretches, he had no alternative but to commit himself to the hands of Omnipotence, and wait his deliverance. After remaining in prison 14 days, he gained his own consent to give bond, and go home.

We have thus stated a few instances of the sufferings of God's ministers, in those times: time and space would fail to enumerate them all; many of them, however, will be rehearsed, in treating upon the churches, and in the biography of some of the sufferers. The trial and imprisonment of all the rest, differ only in small matters from those already described. From the beginning, the Baptists were unremitting in their exertions to obtain liberty of con-

science : they contended that they could not be imprisoned by any existing law : that they were entitled to the same privileges that were enjoyed by the dissenters in England ; their judges, however, decided otherwise, and as there was no regular appeal, the propriety of that decision, has not been legally ascertained ; the prevailing opinion in the present day, is, that their imprisonment was unlawful ; when they could not succeed in this way, they resorted to the general court, for the purpose of obtaining licensed places for preaching, &c. agreeable to the toleration law in England.

It was, in making these attempts, that they were so fortunate as to interest in their behalf, the celebrated Patrick Henry ; being always the friend of liberty, he only needed to be informed of their oppression ; without hesitation, he stepped forward to their relief. From that time, until the day of their complete emancipation, from the shackles of tyranny, the Baptists found in Patrick Henry, an unwavering friend. May his name descend to posterity with unsullied honour ! After some difficulty, they obtained their object, and certain places were licensed accordingly. — But to a people, prompted as the Baptists were, with unwearied zeal for the propagation of the gospel, a few licensed places in each county, was but a small acquisition ; they thirsted for the liberty to preach the gospel to every creature.

In the meantime, every thing tended to favour their wishes : their persecution so far from impeding, really promoted their cause : their preachers had now become numerous, and some of them were men of considerable talents. Many of the leading men favoured them ; some from one motive and some from another : their congregations were large, and when any of their men of talents preached, they were crowded. The patient manner in which they suffered persecution, raised their reputation for piety and goodness, in the estimation of a large majority of the peo-

ple. Their numbers annually increased in a surprising degree. Every month, new places were found by the preachers, whereon to plant the Redeemer's standard. In these places, although but few might become Baptists, yet the majority would be favourable. Many that had expressed great hostility to them, upon forming a more close acquaintance with them, professed to be undeceived. We have already seen, that the first Separate Baptist Church, North of James River, was formed in 1767, and the second in 1769; So that, at the commencement of the year 1770, there were but two Separate Churches in all Virginia, North of James River; and we may add, there were not more than about four, on the South side. In 1774, by referring to the history of the general association, we find, that there were 30 on the South, and 24 on the North side, that sent letters, &c. to the association; besides a probability of several that did not associate. This must be considered a very rapid increase, for so short a time. The Baptist interest increased in a much greater proportion. So favourable did their prospects appear, that towards the close of the year 1774, they began to entertain serious hopes, not only of obtaining liberty of conscience, but, of actually overturning the church establishment, from whence, all their oppressions had arisen. Petitions for this purpose were accordingly drawn, and circulated with great industry. Vast numbers readily, and indeed eagerly, subscribed to them. The great success and rapid increase of the Baptists in Virginia, must be ascribed primarily, to the power of God working with them. Yet it cannot be denied, but, that there were subordinate and co-operating causes; one of which, and the main one, was the loose and immoral deportment of the established clergy, by which, the people were left almost destitute of even the shadow of true religion. 'Tis true, they had some outward forms of worship, but the essential principles of christianity, were, not only not understood among them, but by many, never heard of. Some of the cardinal precepts

of morality, were disregarded, and actions plainly forbidden by the New Testament, were often proclaimed by the clergy, harmless and innocent, or at worst, foibles of but little account. Having no discipline, every man followed the bent of his own inclination. It was not uncommon for the rectors of parishes, to be men of the loosest morals. The Baptist preachers were, in almost every respect, the reverse of the established clergy. The Baptist preachers were without learning, without patronage, generally very poor, very plain in their dress, unrefined in their manners, and awkward in their address; all of which, by their enterprising zeal and unwearied perseverance, they either turned to advantage, or prevented their ill effects. On the other hand, most of the ministers of the establishment were men of classical and scientific educations, patronised by men in power, connected with great families, supported by competent salaries, and put into office by the strong arm of civil power. Thus pampered and secure, the men of this order, were rolling on the bed of luxury, when the others began their extraordinary career.— Their learning, riches, power, &c. seemed only to hasten their overthrow, by producing an unguarded heedlessness, which is so often the prelude to calamity and downfall.

We are not to understand, that this important ecclesiastical revolution, was effected wholly by the Baptists — They were certainly the most active; but they were also joined by other dissenters. Nor was the dissenting interest, all united, by any means, at that time, equal to the accomplishment of such a revolution; we must turn our eyes to the political state of the country, to find adequate causes for such a change.

The British yoke had now galled to the quick: and the Virginians, as having the most tender necks, were among the first to wince. Republican principles had gained much ground, and were fast advancing to superiority; the leading men on that side, viewed the established clergy, and the established religion, as in-

separable appendages of Monarchy ; one of the pillars by which it was supported. The dissenters, at least the Baptists, were republicans from interest, as well as principle ; it was known that their influence was great among the common people ; and the common people of every country are, more or less, republicans. To resist British oppressions effectually ; it was necessary to soothe the minds of the people by every species of policy. The dissenters were too powerful to be slighted, and they were too watchful, to be cheated, by an ineffectual sacrifice. There had been a time, when they would have been satisfied, to have paid their tithes, if they could have had liberty of conscience ; but now, the crisis was such, that nothing less than a total overthrow of all ecclesiastical distinctions, would satisfy their sanguine hopes. Having started the decaying edifice, every dissenter put to his shoulder, to push it into irretrievable ruin.—The revolutionary party found that the sacrifice must be made, and they made it.

It is said however, and probably not without truth, that many of the Episcopalians who voted for abolishing the establishment, did it, upon an expectation that it would be succeeded by a general assessment : And considering, that most of the men of wealth were on that side, they supposed that their funds would be lessened very little. This, it appeared in the sequel, was a vain expectation. The people having once shaken off their fetters, would not again permit themselves to be bound. Moreover, the war now rising to its height, they were in too much need of funds, to permit any of their resources, to be devoted to any other purpose, during that period ; and, we shall see, that when it was attempted, a few years after the expiration of the war, the people set their faces against it. Having thus mentioned the establishment, it will be proper to treat more fully, respecting the origin and nature of those laws, by which it arose and fell.

Our ancestors, being chiefly emigrants from En-

gland, brought with them all that religious intolerance which had so long prevailed in the mother country.— Thus we see, that the first care of our early legislatures was to provide for the church of England, as established by the act of parliament. By the first act of 1623, it is provided that, in every plantation, or settlement, there shall be a house or room set apart for the worship of God. But, it soon appears that this worship was only to be according to the canons of the church of England, to which a strict uniformity was enjoined. A person absenting himself from divine service, on a Sunday, without a reasonable excuse, forfeited a pound of tobacco; and he that absented himself a month, forfeited 50 lbs. Any minister who was absent from his church above two months in a year, forfeited half his salary; and he who absented himself four months, forfeited the whole. Whoever disparaged a minister, whereby the minds of his parishioners might be alienated, was compelled to pay 500 lbs. of tobacco, and ask the minister's pardon publicly in the congregation. No man was permitted to dispose of any of his tobacco, till the minister was satisfied, under the penalty of forfeiting double his part of the minister's salary.

The first allowance made to the ministers was ten lb. of tobacco and a bushel of corn for each tithable; and every labouring person, of what quality or condition soever, was bound to contribute. In the year 1631, the assembly granted to the ministers, besides the former allowance of ten pounds of tobacco and a bushel of corn, the 20th calf, the 20th kid, and the 20th pig. This was the first introduction of tithes, properly so called, in Virginia. But it did not continue long; for, in 1633, the law was repealed.

To preserve the "purity of doctrine, and unity of the church," it was enacted in 1643, that all ministers should be conformable to the orders and constitutions of the church of England, and that no others be permitted to teach or preach publicly or privately. It was further provided, that the governor and council

should take care that all *non-conformists*, departed the colony with all conveniency.

The statute of England of the 3d of James I. against popish recusants, was also adopted in the year 1643. This statute, declared that no popish recusant should exercise the office of secret counsellor, register, commissioner (a term then used for justices of the peace), surveyor, or sheriff, or any other public office. Nor should any person be admitted into any of those offices, before he had taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. The same act of assembly, by which the statute of 3d James I. was adopted, further declared, that if any person should assume the exercise of any of those offices, and refuse to take the said oaths, he should be dismissed, and moreover forfeit 1000 pounds of tobacco. No popish priest thereafter arriving in the colony, was permitted to remain more than five days, if wind and weather permitted his departure.

During the existance of the commonwealth of England, the church government of Virginia experienced an important change. Instead of enjoining obedience to the doctrine and discipline of the church of England, no injunction in favour of any particular sect appears. Every thing relating to the affairs of the church, was left at the entire disposal of the vestry, who being elected by the people, it may, in effect, be said that the people regulated their own church government.

The above law passed at the March session 1657-8. But only two years afterwards (at the March session 1659-60), when the Quakers first made their appearance in Virginia, the utmost degree of persecution was exercised towards them. No master of a vessel was permitted to bring in a Quaker, under the penalty of 100*l.* sterling; all Quakers were imprisoned without bail or mainprize, till they found sufficient security to depart the colony; for returning, they were directed to be provided against as contemnners of the laws and magistracy, and punished accordingly; and if they

should come in a third time, they were to be prosecuted as felons. All persons were prohibited under the penalty of 100*l.* sterling from entertaining them, or permitting their assemblies in or near their houses ; and no person was permitted to dispose of, or publish, any books or pamphlets containing the tenets of their religion. An awful memento of the danger of giving to the civil authority, power over the consciences of the people ! This severe law against the quakers, passed during the commonwealth, when the people were unrestrained in matters of religion ; but it happened in this case, as it generally has, where the civil power undertakes to interfere at all, that the ruling party in the *state*, will tolerate no religion in the *church*, but their own.

A levy of 15 *lb.* of tobacco per poll was laid, in the year 1655, upon all tithables ; the surplus of which, after paying the minister's salary, was to be laid out in purchasing a glebe and stock for the minister.--- This law was re-enacted in the revisal of 1657. After the restoration of Charles II. which happened on the 29th of May 1660, a temporary provision was again made for the established church.

In the year 1661, the supremacy of the church of England, was again fully established. The first nine acts of the session held in March 1661-2, are devoted to that subject. A church was to be built in each parish ; and vestries appointed. Glebes were directed to be procured for the ministers, and convenient houses built thereon ; in addition to which, their salaries were fixed at 80*l.* per annum, at least, besides their perquisites. No minister was permitted to preach, unless he had received ordination from some bishop in England. If any person, without such ordination, attempted to preach publicly or privately, the governor and council might suspend and silence him ; and, if he persisted, they were empowered to send him out of the country. In those parishes, where there was not a minister to officiate every Sunday, a *reader* was to be

appointed, whose duty it was to read divine service every intervening Sunday. The liturgy, according to the canons of the church of England, was to be read every Sunday by the minister or reader; and the administration of the sacraments was to be duly observed. No other catechism than that, inserted in the book of common prayer, could be taught by the minister; nor could a reader attempt to expound that, or the scriptures. Ministers were compelled to preach every Sunday; one Sunday in a month, at the Chapel, if any, and the others at the parish church; and twice a year he was compelled to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Every person was compelled to attend church every Sunday, under the penalty of 50 lb. of tobacco. But Quakers and non-conformists were liable to the penalties of the statute of 23d Elizabeth, which was 20*l.* sterling for every month's absence, and, moreover, for twelve months' absence, to give security for their good behaviour.--- Quakers were further liable to a fine of 200 lbs. of tobacco, for each one found at one of their meetings; and in case of the insolvency of any one of them, those who were able were to pay for the insolvents.*

Various other laws passed between the above period, and the commencement of the American revolution, by which the established religion of the church of England was protected by the state. The salary of the ministers was first settled at 16 thousand pounds of tobacco, in the year 1696, be levied by the vestry on the tithables of their parish, and so continued to the revolution. Any minister admitted into a parish, was entitled to all the spiritual and temporal rights thereof; and might maintain an action against any person who attempted to disturb him in his possession.

The same acts provided for the purchase of glebes for the ministers.

* See Hening's statutes at large, vol. I. & II. for the above laws.

Though the toleration law, is not believed to have been *strictly* obligatory in Virginia, yet, as was frequently the case, at that period, it was acted under in many instances.... That it was *doubtful* whether acts of parliament respecting religion, were in force in Virginia, appears, by the act of October 1776, ch. 2, sec. 1. Even this act of toleration, is, a most flagrant violation of religious freedom.

At the October session 1776, the first law passed suspending the payment of the salaries formerly allowed to the ministers of the church of England. The preamble to this act is worthy of consideration, and was probably drawn by Mr. Jefferson, who was then a member. A number of memorials from different religious societies, dissenters from the church of England, were presented to this assembly, praying to be exempted from the payment of parochial dues to the church of England, and for the abolition of the established church. In opposition to these, there was a memorial from the clergymen of the church of England, praying that the establishment might be continued.

These memorials formed the basis of the act of that session above mentioned. This act, “for exempting the different societies of dissenters from contributing to the support and maintenance of the church, as by law established, and its ministers,” was preceded by a set of resolutions, recognizing the same principles which were afterwards engrafted into the act itself. It does not appear by what majority this act passed, as the ayes and noes were not taken on it. At the May session 1777, the payment of the salaries allowed to the clergy of the church of England, was further suspended; and at the October session 1779, so much of every act as related to the salaries formerly given to the clergy of the church of England, was repealed.

The question, as to the propriety of a general assessment, had long been much agitated, and a great variety of opinions existed respecting it. By the 5th section of

the act of October 1776, which first suspended the payment of the salaries allowed to the clergy of the church of England; this question as to a general assessment is expressly left undecided.

In 1784, the subject of a general assessment was again revived. A bill, which had for its object the compelling of every person to contribute to some religious teacher, was introduced into the House of Delegates; under the title of "A Bill, establishing provision for the teachers of the Christian religion;" but on its third reading, it was postponed till the fourth Thursday in November then next. Ayes 45, Noes 38. The following resolution was immediately afterwards adopted. "*Resolved*, that the engrossed bill establishing a provision for the teachers of the Christian religion, together with the names of the ayes and noes on the question of postponing the third reading of the said bill to the fourth Thursday in November next, be published in hand-bills, and twelve copies thereof delivered to each member of the General Assembly, to be distributed in their respective counties; and that the people thereof, be requested to signify their opinion respecting the adoption of such a bill to the next session of assembly."

The above resolution drew forth a number of able and animated memorials from religious societies of different denominations, against the general assessment. Among a great variety of compositions, possessing different degrees of merit, a paper drawn up by Col. James Madison (now President of the United States), intitled "A Memorial and Remonstrance," will ever hold a most distinguished place. For elegance of style, strength of reasoning, and purity of principle, it has, perhaps, seldom been equalled; certainly never surpassed by any thing in the English language.✱

The sentiments of the people appearing to be decidedly against a general assessment, the question was given up forever.

At the same session, however, (Oct. 1784,) in which the bill providing for a general assessment failed, an act passed for "Incorporating the Protestant Episcopal Church." This bill passed the House of Delegates by a small majority only, being ayes 47, noes 38; but in 1786, it was repealed. By the repealing law, the property belonging to all religious societies was secured to those societies respectively, who were authorised to appoint from time to time, according to the rules of their sect, trustees, for the managing and applying such property to the religious uses of the society. And all laws, which prevented any religious society from regulating its own discipline, were repealed.

Under the old ecclesiastical establishment, no person could celebrate the rites of matrimony, but a minister of the church of England, and according to the ceremony prescribed in the book of common prayer. Cases, however, frequently occurred, especially during the war, where the marriage ceremony was performed by others. This gave rise to an act of October 1780, which declared all former marriages celebrated by dissenting ministers good and valid in law; and authorised the county courts to license dissenting ministers of the gospel, not exceeding four to each sect, to celebrate the rites of matrimony within their counties only. It was not until the year 1784, that the dissenters were put on the same footing as all other persons, with respect to celebrating the rites of matrimony. By this act, the marriage ceremony might be performed by any minister licensed to preach, according to the rules of the sect of which he professed to be a member. The same act has been incorporated in the late revival of our laws,

The legislature of 1798, repealed all laws vesting property in the hands of any religious sect. By which the Episcopalians were deprived of the glebes, &c. by which all religious sects were put into a state

of perfect equality, as it respected the favours of government.*

CHAPTER IV.

From the Abolition of the Established Church to the present times, being the end of the General History of the Separate Baptists.

THE war, though very propitious to the liberty of the Baptists, had an opposite effect upon the life of religion, among them. As if persecution was more favourable to vital piety, than unrestrained liberty, they seem to have abated in their zeal, upon being unshackled from their manacles. This may be ascribed to several causes: Both preachers and people were so much engrossed, with anxious thoughts, and schemes for effecting the revolution, as well as with alternate hopes and fears for the event, it was not probable that religion should not lose some portion of its influence upon the minds of professors thus divided. The downfall of Jeremiah Walker,† and some other preachers of less note, together with the contentions arising from Waller's defection,‡ contributed, not a little, towards damping the zeal of the Baptists. Having lost some of their champions in Israel, they could not, with the same boldness, face their enemies. Perhaps we may add, that many did not rightly estimate the true source of liberty, nor ascribe its attainment to the proper arm. In consequence of which, God sent them liberty, and with it, leanness of soul. This chill to their religious affections, might have subsided with the war, or perhaps sooner, if there had not been subsequent occurrences, which tended to keep them down. The opening a free trade by peace, served as a powerful bait, to en-

* Most of the above history of the laws of Virginia, respecting religion, was furnished by Wm. W. Hening, Esq.

† See Walker's biography.

‡ See Waller's biography.

trap professors who were in any great degree, inclined to the pursuit of wealth. Nothing is more common, than for the increase of riches, to produce a decrease of piety. Speculators seldom make warm christians. Kentucky and the Western Country took off many of the preachers, who had once been, exceeding successful in the ministry. From whatever cause, certain it is, that they suffered a very wintry season. With some few exceptions the declension was general, throughout the state. The love of many waxed cold. Some of the watchmen fell, others stumbled, any many slumbered at their posts. Iniquity greatly abounded. Associations were but thinly attended, and the business badly conducted. God has left many promises, that he will not always chide nor be angry with his people; that he will turn again the captivity of Zion, &c. The long and great declension, induced many to fear, that the times of refreshing would never come, but that God had wholly forsaken them.

Their enemies likewise often reproached them, saying: "Where is the promise of his coming. We believed and said they would come to nothing, and our prediction is fast fulfilling." But, *let God be true and every man a liar.* The set time to favour Zion, at length arrived, and as the declension had been general, so also was the revival. It may be considered as having begun in 1785, on James River. It spread, as fire among stubble. Continuing for several years, in different parts: very few churches were without the blessing: How great the change! When religion was down, nothing but lamentations, mixed with groans and tears, could be heard, from its zealous advocates. Oh! that it were with us as in days past, when the candle of the Lord shined upon us. "*How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed!*" This cry was reversed, so soon as Heaven smiled. "*We are as men that dream.... This surely is too great to be real. Our mouths are*

filled with laughter, and our tongues with singing."

On the part of the many who were convicted in the congregations, you could hear earnest cries for mercy, with many tears and lamentations. From lips, that had previously been employed in blasphemy, you would hear, "*What shall we do to be saved. God be merciful to me a sinner.*" In a time of revival, there are but few who go to meetings, that are not more or less affected. Some indeed, are much exasperated, and call it hypocrisy, delusion, enthusiasm, &c.— Yet even of these, it does not unfrequently happen, that some will become deeply convicted, and finally, profess that faith which they once despised. The manner of conducting the general revival, was somewhat extraordinary. It was not unusual, to have a large proportion of a congregation, prostrate on the floor; and, in some instances, they have lost the use of their limbs: No distinct articulation could be heard, unless from those immediately by: Screams, cries, groans, songs, shouts, and huzzas, notes of grief and notes of joy, all heard at the same time, made a heavenly confusion, a sort of indescribable concert. Even the wicked and unenlightened, were astonished, and said, *the Lord hath done great things for this people.* At associations and great meetings, where there were several ministers, many of them would exercise their gifts at the same time, in different parts of the congregation; some in exhortation; some in praying for the distressed; and some in argument with opposers. At first, many of the preachers did not approve of this kind of work. They thought it extravagant. Others fanned it, as fire from heaven. It is not unworthy of notice, that in those congregations, where the preachers encouraged these exercises to much extent, the work was more extensive, and greater numbers were added. It must also be admitted, that in many of these congregations, no little confusion and disorder arose, after the revival had subsided. Some have accounted for this by an

old maxim : *Where much good is done, much evil will also be done : Where God sows many good seed, the enemy will sow many tares.* Be it as it may, certain it is, that many ministers, who laboured earnestly to get Christians into their churches, were after wards much perplexed, to get out hypocrites. Perhaps the best conclusion is, to avoid either extreme. A stiff formality, or an inordinate confusion, ought each to be shunned. A scriptural and rational animation is from God, and ought to be indulged and encouraged. Yet vigilance ought to be used, to keep off actual fanaticism, as being the effect of natural and unenlightened emotions.

It has been already said, that this revival commenced in the year 1785. It continued spreading, until about 1791, or 1792. Thousands were converted and baptized, besides many who joined the Methodists and Presbyterians. The Protestant Episcopalians, altho' much dejected, by the loss of the establishment, had nevertheless, continued their public worship, and were attended by respectable congregations. But after this revival, their society fell fast into dissolution. This revival among the Baptists, did not produce as many young preachers, as might have been expected. Mr. Leland, in his *Virginia Chronicle*, from which many of the foregoing remarks have been taken, makes the following observation :

“ In the late great additions, that have been made to the churches, there are but few, who have engaged in the work of the ministry. Whether it is because the old preachers stand in their way ; or, whether it is because the people do not pray the Lord of the harvest, to thrust out labourers ; or, whether it is not rather a judgment of God upon the people, or neglecting those, who are already in the work, not communicating to them in all good things, I cannot say.”

From this revival, great changes took place among the Baptists, some for the better, and others for the

worse. Their preachers were become much more correct in their manner of preaching : A great many odd tones, disgusting whoops and awkward gestures, were disused : In their matter also, they had more of sound sense and strong reasoning. Their zeal was less mixed with enthusiasm, and their piety became more rational. They were much more numerous, and of course, in the eyes of the world, more respectable. Besides, they were joined by persons of much greater weight, in civil society : Their congregations became more numerous, than those of any other Christian sect ; and in short, they might be considered, from this period, as taking the lead in matters of religion, in many places of the state. This could not, but influence their manners and spirit, more or less. Accordingly, a great deal of that simplicity and plainness, that rigid scrupulosity about little matters, which so happily tends to keep us at a distance from greater follies, was laid aside. Their mode of preaching, also was somewhat changed. At their first entrance into the state, though not incoherent in their method and language, they were quite correct in their views upon all subjects of primary importance. No preachers ever dealt out to their hearers, the nature of experimental religion, more clearly and more warmly. As their respectability increased, the preachers and their hearers found a relish for stronger meat, which, to a proper extent, was very suitable : but it too often happened in indulging this, that party spirit, and even vanity, had too much influence, 'To dive deeply into the mysteries of the gospel ; to tell, or to make a plausible guess, about what happened before the world was made ; or what will happen before it shall end ; looked more wise, and excited more applause, than to travel on in the old track. Some of the preachers likewise, falling unhappily into the Arminian scheme, stirred up no small disputation, and thereby imperceptibly drove their opponents to the borders, if not within

the lines, of Antinomianism. Practical piety was, in many places, too little urged. These things were followed by a relaxation in discipline, in many of the churches; and a consequent state of disorder. It must not be understood, that these irregularities went to very great lengths, or, that they generally prevailed: This was by no means the case. They had not become as the church at Laodicca, or Sardis; but rather as the church at Ephesus; they had, in a degree, left their first love. Wherever these evils prevailed, disagreeable consequences, sooner or later, sprung from them. The Baptist name fell into disrepute; their principles were reprobated, as leading to licentiousness; their meetings were deserted by the people, who thus misled, in many places, turned to other societies.

It is a fact, quite obvious to every religious character, that has travelled through Virginia, and made observations, that there are few instances in which the Baptists have not flourished to a considerable extent, except in places where their cause has been badly supported, or completely betrayed, by the disorders of professors.

Since the great revival just described, there have been several partial ones, which will be taken notice of in their proper places.

ASSOCIATIONS.

CHAPTER V.

Containing a History of the General Association of the Separate Baptists, from their first session, until the division in 1783.

AN ASSOCIATION is a council or assembly, composed of delegates or representatives, from each church, within the bounds designated for that purpose. The object of which, is to take into consideration the welfare of the churches, and to assist them by their counsel, in the preservation of order and discipline among themselves. Each church sends by their delegates, a letter directed to the association. These letters inform the association, whom they have deputed as delegates; what is the state and standing of the church; their number; deaths; removals; additions and exclusions, &c.* The Baptist churches are independent, and consequently the business of an association, is not authoritative. They may advise, and indeed urge their advice, but cannot compel.

The business of associations is commonly drawn from the letters, being inserted by the churches, by way of query. This, however, is not the only mode of introducing it. The debates are generally short, and the whole business is commonly completed in two days. In Virginia, most, if not all the associations, include Sunday, as one of the days for their being together. Nothing is attended to on this day, except preaching,

* In a time of revival, it is quite animating to hear the letters read.

and the different parts of public worship: Vast crowds, in most places, attend associations, for the purpose of hearing the preaching: For, in addition to the ministrations of Sunday, the congregations who assemble on the other days, are entertained at some convenient place, by preachers, sent out by the association for that purpose: Therefore, besides the good derived from the immediate business of an association, the indirect advantages are very great. From a conviction of this truth, the *Dover Association*, in one of her circular letters, inserts the following remarks.* “ The indirect advantages of associations, can only be known by experience. Those who have been accustomed to attend them, have seen and felt the blessings conveyed through them. We conceive it is no inconsiderable advantage, that an opportunity should be offered for brethren to see each other. *As iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.* A second advantage is, that they communicate to each other, the transactions of the different parts of the country from whence they came. They tell how richly the grace of God is communicated; how profusely his blessings are poured out, and how wisely ordered are all his providences. *As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.* Thirdly, they may be beneficial to the church and neighbourhood, in and about which, they may be holden: seeing they have it in their power, to hear those gifts and talents displayed, that are best calculated to instruct, and most likely to profit. Fourthly, advantages may arise, to almost every part of the district, by the visits of the ministers, as they pass to and from the association.”

There are fifteen associations wholly within the state of Virginia; besides four others, of which a part only are within this state, the other part being in some adjacent state. Of the fifteen, six lie North of James

* The circular letter for 1794.

River, viz. Ketocton, Culpeper, Albemarle, Goshen, Dover and Accomack; six South of James River, Portsmouth, Middle District, Meherrin, Appomattox, Roanoke and Strawberry; and three West of the Alleghany mountains; New-River, Greenbrier, and Union. Those four, a part of which only lie in Virginia, are Mayo, on the borders of Virginia and N. Carolina; Mountain, on the borders of Virginia, N. Carolina and Tennessee; Holston, on the borders of Virginia and Tennessee; and Redstone, on the borders of Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio. A particular account of each of these, will be given in their proper order. In the meantime, we must begin with the Original Separate Baptist Association.

Having related how, through their evangelical labours, the Separates had disseminated the principles of the Baptists, or rather the doctrines of the New Testament, through various parts of the state of Virginia and North-Carolina; we shall now enquire, after what manner, they were employed in their deliberative assemblies. We have already noticed (page 6th), that through the counsel of Mr. Stearns, an association was formed and organized January 1760,* and who met again in July of the same year. Including both these meetings; the list of their churches stood thus:

Sandy Creek. Elder Shabal Stearns.

Deep River. Nathaniel Powel (a brother).

Abbot's Creek. Elder Daniel Marshall.

Little River. Joseph Breed (a brother).

Neus River. Ezekiel Hunter.

Black River. John Newton.

Dan River,
Pittsylvania C'ty. Va. } Elder Samuel Harriss.

Lunenburg C'ty. Va. William Murphy.

* The account of this Association is taken from Bacchus's History of the Baptists of New-England, vol. 3d. page 274.

We are not to look for regularity and method, among a people, whose only study, was the prosperity of vital godliness. No church had been regularly constituted in Virginia, at the time of either of these associations. It would seem, however, that those two mentioned in the list, were sufficiently numerous to exercise the privileges of a church, and were therefore admitted into the association. The chief business of these associations, was to receive petitions and to appoint preachers to travel into new places, where the gospel was likely to flourish. “ We continued together (says the manuscript of James Read, who was present), “ three or four days. Great crowds of people attended, mostly through curiosity : The great power “ of God was among us : The preaching every day, “ seemed to be attended with God’s blessing : We “ carried on our association, with sweet decorum and “ fellowship to the end : Then we took leave of one “ another, with many solemn charges from our Reverend old father Shubal Stearns, to stand fast unto “ the end.”*

At their next association, multitudes both of friends and strangers came ; many from a great distance. The Rev. John Gano, from N. England, was there. He was sent, it seems, by his association, to enquire into the state of these *New-light Baptists*. He was received by Stearns, with great affection. But the young and illiterate preachers were afraid of him and kept at a distance. They even refused to invite him into their association. All this he bore patiently, sitting by, while they transacted the business. He preached also every day. His preaching was in the spirit of the gospel. Their hearts were opened, so that before he left them, they were greatly attached to him. So superior were Mr. Gano’s talents for preaching, that some of the young and unlearned preachers said, they felt as if they never could undertake to preach again.—

* These remarks apply to the July association ; it is probable that of January was only a small meeting, and adjourned soon after they met.

This association was also conducted in love, peace and harmony. When Mr. Gano returned to his own country, being asked, what he thought of these Baptists, replied, that "*doubtless the power of God was among them. That altho' they were rather immethodical, they certainly had the root of the matter at heart.*"

At their third association, it seems they were gratified with the most pleasing accounts of the great spread of the gospel. Very many requests were also sent, from various quarters, for preachers to be sent them. They had a very happy association.

The associations continued thus happy and thus increasing: insomuch, that at their fifth or sixth session, it appears they received delegates from some churches as high up as the mountains, and from thence to the ocean. In 1767, some of the Spottsylvania preachers attended the association, and obtained the attendance of a presbytery, to constitute their first church. The sessions were all held in the vicinity of Stearns, and the older preachers. The younger ones, from Virginia and both the Carolinas, attended constantly, and derived much knowledge and consolation from the conversation of the more experienced. From such accounts as can be had, it appears that all these associations were conducted with peace and harmony, and were productive of extensive usefulness.

After the disagreement between the *Regulars* and *Separates*, which took place in Spottsylvania, attempts were made, on both sides, to effect a reconciliation. Among the *Separates*, the objections raised by a few popular characters, prevailed. They, it seems, thought the *Regulars* were not sufficiently particular, in small matters, such as dress, &c. They also expressed fears, that the confession of faith adopted by the *Regulars*, might in time, bind them too much; as there were some objectionable parts. A majority of the *Regulars* were favourable to an union. Some, however,

wished that the confession of faith, should be adopted by the Separates, by way of condition.

In 1769, an association was holden by the Separates, in N. Carolina, to which the Ketocton or Regular Baptist Association, sent as messengers, the Rev. Messrs. Garret, Major and Saunders, with a letter, of which the following is an extract.

“ Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

“ The bearers of this letter can acquaint you with the design of writing it. Their errand is peace, and their business is a reconciliation between us, if there is any difference subsisting. If we are all Christians, all Baptists, all New-lights, why are we divided.—Must the little appellative names, Regular and Separate, break the golden band of charity, and set the sons and daughters of Zion at variance. “ *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,*” but how bad and how bitter it is, for them to live asunder in discord.—To indulge ourselves in prejudice, is surely a disorder; and to quarrel about nothing, is irregularity with a witness. O! our dear brethren, endeavour to prevent this calamity for the future.”

This excellent letter was presented to the association, and after a lengthy debate, the proposal for an union, was rejected by a small majority.

The Separate Baptist Association met again in 1770, at Grassley Creek Meeting House, N. Carolina. The churches had now become numerous, there being a considerable number in each of the three states. It had been usual with them, to do nothing in associations but by unanimity. If in any measure proposed, there was a single dissentient; they laboured first by arguments to come to unanimous agreement; when arguments failed, they resorted to frequent prayer, in which all joined. When both these failed, they some-

times appointed the next day for fasting and prayer, and to strive to bring all, to be of one mind. At this session, they split in their first business: Nothing could be done on the first day. They appointed the next for fasting and prayer. They met and laboured the whole day, until an hour by sun in the afternoon, and could do nothing, not even appoint a Moderator. The third day was appointed for the same purpose, and to be observed in the same way. They met early, and continued together until three o'clock in the afternoon, without having accomplished any thing. A proposal was then made, that the association should be divided into three districts, that is, one in each state. To this there was an unanimous consent at once.

Whereupon, they appointed the first session for the Association in Virginia, to be holden at Thomson's Meeting House, in Louisa county, the last Saturday in September 1771.

For North Carolina, at Haw River Meeting-House; and

For South-Carolina, at Seleuda.

The association then dismissed, without transacting any other business.* It was, however, privately agreed upon among the Virginia delegates, to hold an occasional session, at E. Craig's Meeting House, in Orange county, the second Saturday in May 1771. This was designed more particularly for the purpose of forming regulations, &c.

They did accordingly meet in May, and as this was the first session of the Virginia Separate Baptist As-

* The above relation is taken from a manuscript of Elijah Craig, who was present.

sociation, it will not be unacceptable to our readers, to insert the proceedings in full.

MINUTES OF THE FIRST SEPARATE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

At an Occasional Association, held at Craig's Meeting House in Orange County, second Saturday in May, 1771.

By a private poll, SAMUEL HARRISS was chosen Moderator, and JOHN WALLER, jun. Clerk.

The letters from the several Churches were read. The state of each was as follows.

| <i>Names of Churches.</i> | <i>Names of Delegates.</i> | <i>Added by baptism since October.</i> | <i>By experience or commendatory letters.</i> | <i>Removed by death.</i> | <i>By excommunication.</i> | <i>Under censure.</i> | <i>Dismissed.</i> | <i>Restored.</i> | <i>Now under care.</i> |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Falls creek church, Pittsylvania. | Samuel Harriss, Jacob Metciff. | 32 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 62 |
| Bedford do. a new church. | William Lovell. | | | | | | | | 29 |
| Amherst do. a new church. | Thomas Hargitt and James Meneese. | | | | | | | | 26 |
| Buckingham do. | Rane Chastain, jr. and Wm. Johnston. | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 52 |
| Amelia do. | Jeremiah Walker, David Ellington and John Williams. | 66 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 5 | 260 |
| Louisa do. | James Childs, David Thompson and Andrew Trebble. | 17 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 100 |
| Lower Church in Spottsylvania. | John Waller, John Burrus, Reuben Ford and Wm. Webber. | 103 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 57 | 2 | 253 |
| Middle do. in do. | Lewis Craig, Jos. Bledsoe, William Card and John Craig. | 31 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 105 |
| Upper do. in Orange. | Elijah Craig, George Twiman, Bartlet Benet and George Eves. | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 120 |
| Culpeper do. | John Monrow and Th: Peyton. | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 21 |
| Carter's Run do. in Fauquier. | Joseph Hotsclaw and James Wethers. | 76 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 148 |
| Shenandoah, do. in Frederick. | William Marshall and Reuben Pickett. | 78 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 159 |
| Black Water do. in Bedford. | Neither delegate nor letter. | | | | | | | | |
| Dan River do. in Pittsylvania. | Neither letter nor delegate. | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Total.</i> | | 120 | 19 | 5 | 23 | 20 | 66 | 9 | 1325 |

Adjourned 'till Monday morning eight o'clock.

May 13th, 1771, Monday morning.—Met together all except our brethren David Ellington, James Childs and Thomas Peyton, who disappeared. We all agreed to proceed to business, as follows.

1st. It is unanimously agreed that the association has no power or authority, to impose any thing upon the churches ; but that we act as an advisory council.

2d. We believe we have a right to withdraw ourselves from any church, that may neglect to correspond with us, and justify their conduct.

3d. With regard to the constitution of churches.—Any number of members, that live at a distance too far to assemble with ease, with the body of the church, at their monthly meeting, having first obtained leave from their church, have a right to petition any ordained minister of the same faith and order, with what helps he chooses, being approved of by the members, to look into their stability, and if found ripe, to constitute them a church ; the said churches, describing their boundary and allowing the privilege to any member that lives near to the said limits, to join which of the churches he pleases.

4th. With regard to ordination, &c.—Every ordained minister of the same faith, &c. being legally called upon by any such church, may administer the sacraments among them, and with the help of their church ordain their elders or deacons, if found qualified, and in case they have made choice of a minister whom they desire to be examined and ordained, they may petition neighboring ministers to proceed in the said work, and on special occasions, any of them failing to come, one ordained minister with an ordained elder or elders, may proceed in the ordination.

5th. We advise any church, in distraction or distress, to send for helps from one or more sister churches, to assist them in such a case.

6th. It is agreed, that if any delegate, sent from any church, should transgress in any instance, unknown to his church, the offended party, his fellow delegate and the moderator, may bar him from sitting.

7th. All matters brought before the association for their advice, to be determined by a majority of voices, except

what from the clearness of scripture light, forces conviction on all; then, there is no necessity for putting it to the decision of votes.

8th. It is agreed, that an itinerant minister may be ordained without applying to the association, by a presbytery of ministers, (and we advise that as many as conveniently can, may be called for that purpose,) upon their examination and a recommendation of his doctrine and manner of life, from the church he is a member of.

9th. It is agreed that a circular letter be sent by the association to each church, informing them something of the heads of their business, &c.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning 7 o'clock.

Tuesday Morning.—Came together, and proceeded as follows: The delegates names being called over, our brethren David Ellington, David Thompson, Andrew Trebble and Bartlet Bennet, failed to appear.

Present—David Thompson and Andrew Trebble.

It is agreed that every church, with respect to covenanting, is left to use their own liberty.

We advise every church to insert all their queries, in their letters to the association. Present—Brother Bartlet Bennet,

The church of Shenandoah and Fauquier, having requested help with respect to the ordination of elders, baptizing, &c. brother Samuel Harris agrees (God willing,) to go and answer the said request.

A Quere from the Church in Orange, viz. Whether we have a right to dismiss a member from under the care of our order?

Answered in the negative.*

A Quere from Amelia Church, viz. Whether church dealing ought not to be transacted privately, the members only being present?

Answered in the negative.

* This means a dismissal from the Baptist Society altogether, and not a dismissal from one Baptist Church to join another.

A Quere from do. viz. What are the terms of communion, fixt in the word of God?

Answered.—Fellowship in the same faith and order.

A Quere from do. Whether any member, who shall refuse to acknowledge himself obliged by the scripture, to observe the Sabbath, should not be avoided as heretical, till he retract his sentiments.

Answered.—It is agreed to be referred to the next association.

A Quere from Lower Spottsylvania Church, viz. Whether it is lawful and expedient, for our ministers to obtain licence from the civil law, for only one, or more meeting places; and so be restricted from that general licence, given them by King Jesus Mark 16th, ch. 15th, and 16th verse, &c.

Answered.—It is agreed to be referred to the next association.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning 7 o'clock.

Wednesday Morning.—Met and proceeded as follows: The church of Christ, on Black Water, in Bedford, having sent neither letter nor delegate to this association; at the request of the association, brother Samuel Harris and brother Wm. Lovell, are agreed to visit them, and invite them to appear by their delegates, at the next association.

The church of Christ, on Dan River, in Pittsylvania, having sent neither letter nor delegate to this association, and hearing that the said church is in distress, brother Walker and brother Burruss are agreed, by and with the consent of the association, to offer them their help the 2d Friday, being the 12th of July 1771; and they are requested to make a report at the next association.

Our brother Harris, who was one of our delegates sent last fall, to visit our sister churches in the South governments in distress, made report, full to our satisfaction.

We advise that a committee of three persons, be

appointed, to settle all expences, that may fall upon the association.

The committee being sent out, returned and made their report, that there was a balance due from us, &c. to the amount of 4*l.* 15*s.* which was received.

The association letter to the several churches, being read, was approved of.

Brother Samuel Harris, was chosen as our delegate, to hold up our correspondence with the North and South-Carolina associations.

Then Adjourned, 'till the last Saturday in September, at Thompson's Meeting-House, in Louisa.

SAMUEL HARRIS, *Moderator.*

JOHN WALLER, jr. *Clerk.*

The association, of which the above are the minutes, was holden nearly forty years past. From them may be gathered, a pretty correct view of the mode of government, used by the Baptists of that day. It will be seen that the government of the present time, varies from it very little.

It is worthy of note, that one of the constitutional articles, disclaims all power over the churches: Yet the next, declares a right in the association, to withdraw from delinquent churches in certain cases. Nothing less can be meant by this article, than that the association in behalf of all orderly churches, in her correspondence, would discountenance all disorderly ones. It is then a question, whether a church discountenanced by the association, can any longer be considered a part of the Baptist Society. Would it not be deemed disorderly, for any other church to continue their fellowship towards one, that could not meet in the same association? Churches may not only become disorderly in practice, but heterodox in sentiment. In Virginia, perhaps, we have been more fortunate; but in Kentucky, and in England, the majority of some of the Baptist churches, have become Arians or Socinians. To give an association power to deal with, and finally to put such out of

their connection, must be proper, and indeed must be what is designed, by the above article. By no other means could a general union be preserved. By the article which disclaims all power, we must understand all power over the internal government of the churches. It is also worthy of note, that while one of the articles declares, that, churches may be constituted, and preachers ordained, without any application to the association; it is recorded in the same minutes, that at the request of a certain church, a minister is appointed by the association, to assist in the ordination of elders, &c. From which, it would seem, that an association is a suitable medium, through which such matters can be advantageously arranged.

The next association, assembled at Thompson's Meeting House, the last Saturday in September, according to the appointment made at Grassley Creek, the year before.

From thence they adjourned to Lewis Craig's meeting house, at which they held their next session, the 2d Saturday in May 1772.

Their next session was holden at Waller's meeting house, the last Saturday in September 1772.

Of the proceedings of these three sessions, we can obtain no certain account.*

The next association was holden at Dover meeting house, in Goochland county, commencing May 8th, 1773. Samuel Harris was appointed Moderator, and John Waller, jr. Clerk. Letters and delegates from thirty-four churches were received. These churches contained 3195 members, of which 526 had been baptized subsequent to the last association. The largest church was Carter's Run, in Fauquier, under the care of the Rev. John Picket, which contained 278 members. The largest number baptized in any one church was 55, in Ready Bottom Church in Halifax, under the care of Reuben Picket. There were

* The time and place was discovered from the letters of correspondence found among Mr. John William's papers.

61 delegates, including among them almost every distinguished preacher in the state.

The following queries and solutions, are recorded in the minutes of this association, viz.

1st. Is the laying on of hands upon baptized members, merely as such, a gospel ordinance or not?

Answer.—The churches are left at their liberty to act as they may think best.

2d. Ought persons in general, who are possessed of ministerial gifts, to be ordained merely as ministers, or ought they to be ordained to a particular charge?

Answer.—A majority in favour of the latter.

3d. Is it lawful to receive a member into fellowship, who is married to his wife's sister?

Answer.—No.

4th. Is it agreeable to scripture, for an unmarried man to take the pastoral care of a church?

Answer.—Yes.

An appointment of four ministers was made at this session, to visit the Kehukee Regular Association and churches, in order to know their standing, and make report. Samuel Harris, E. Craig, John Waller and David Thompson, were appointed.

A motion was made by E. Craig, to divide the association into two districts, viz. one North and one South of James River.

The motion was inserted in the minutes, and referred to the next association.

They held their next session, at Meherrin meeting house, Lunenburg county, in the fall of the same year, i. e. 1773.

Not being able to obtain the minutes of this session, we do not know what business was done, except that they agreed to divide the association, according to the plan proposed in the last association.

The Southern district agreed to meet at Hall's meeting house; Halifax county, second Saturday in May, 1774: The Northern, at Picket's meeting house,

Fauquier county, the fourth Saturday in May, 1774.

This, it will be found in the sequel, was only a temporary division.

The Southern district met, according to appointment, at Hall's meeting house. Samuel Harris was chosen Moderator, and John Williams, Clerk.

Letters and delegates from 27 churches were received. It appears, that the churches in this district, contained at that time 2033 members, of whom 259 had been baptized since the last association. The most numerous church was Banister, under the care of Nathaniel Hall, containing 210 members. The greatest number baptized in any one church was 42, in Meherrin, in Lunenburg county, under the ministry of John Williams.

For three or four years, there had been severe persecutions against the Baptists, in many parts of Virginia. Letters were received at this association, from preachers confined in prison, particularly from David Tinsley, then in Chesterfield jail. The hearts of their brethren were affected at their sufferings, in consequence of which, it was agreed to raise contributions for their aid.

The following resolution was also entered into :

“Agreed to set apart the second and third Saturday in June, as public fast days, in behalf of our poor blind persecutors, and for the releasement of our brethren.”

At this association, for the first time, the following query was introduced, which afterwards produced some weighty consequences.

Query.—Ought all the ministerial gifts recorded in the 4th of Ephesians, 11th, 12th and 13th verses, to be in use in the present time.

Answer.—A great majority suppose, that all the ministerial gifts, recorded in the said scripture are, and ought to be, still in use in the churches. Although we pay a due regard to the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary gifts.

They appointed their next session, to be at Walker's meeting house, in Amelia county, the second Saturday in October 1774.

The Northern District also met in Fauquier, according to their appointment, on the fourth Saturday in May 1774.

Samuel Harris and John Williams having attended this association, as corresponding delegates; from the South district; the former was appointed Moderator, and John Waller, Clerk.

Letters were received from twenty-four churches; stating their numbers in all to be 1921, of whom 158 had been baptized since the last association. The largest church, viz. Lower Spottsylvania, now called Waller's, contained 188 members, being under the charge of John Waller. The greatest number baptized in any one church was twenty-eight. This was the church called the White-House, probably under the ministry of John Koontz.

A Query—Whether the doctrine of the non-eternity of hell-torments, ought to be deemed heretical, and what should be done with a member who held it, was

Answered :—That the doctrine was heretical, and all persons holding it, ought to be purged out of the churches.

To this association, was also sent, the query mentioned above, viz. *Whether the ministerial gifts mentioned in Ephe. 4th chapter, and 11, 12 & 13th verses, are now in use.* After two days debate, a majority decided that it ought to be put off until the next association.

The question respecting a confession of faith was agitated at this session, and decided, *that each church might exercise her own discretion, in adopting the confession of faith, or not.**

* This was called an occasional association, for although they held an association almost every Spring, yet it was a standing rule to have one session in each year, with the liberty to hold another occasionally, when circumstances required it.

The Southern district met in an annual association, according to appointment, at Walker's meeting house, in Amelia county, second Saturday in October 1774.

Letters from thirty churches were received, stating their number in all to be 2083, of whom 416 had been baptized, subsequent to the spring association. The greatest number baptized in any one church was 72, in Bannister church, Halifax county, under the pastoral care of Nathaniel Hall; this was also the largest church, containing 229 members. Samuel Harris was appointed Moderator, and John Williams, Clerk.

A letter was received from the Philadelphia association, with a copy of their minutes. Likewise, the minutes of the Charleston association were received, all of which were read.

At this association, the query respecting the proper interpretation of Eph. 4th, and 11, 12, 13th, was again debated, and by an unanimous vote, three excepted, it was resolved, that the said offices are now in use in Christ's church, and the said three submitted to the majority. It was further resolved, that the said offices be immediately established, by the appointment of certain persons to fill them, provided any, possessed of such gifts, could be found among them.— They then proceeded to the choice of an apostle, by private poll, and the lot fell, by unanimous consent, upon elder Samuel Harris. For the discipline of this high officer, the following rule is entered upon the minutes, viz. *“ If our messenger, or apostle, shall transgress in any manner, he shall be liable to dealing in any church where the transgression is committed, and the said church is instructed to call helps from two or three neighbouring churches, and if by them found a transgressor, a general conference of the churches shall be called, to restore, or excommunicate him.”* They then proceeded to ordain him, according to the following method:

“ The day being set apart as a fast day, we immediately proceeded to ordain him, and the hands of eve-

“ ry ordained minister was laid on him. Public prayer
 “ was made by John Waller, E. Craig, and John Wil-
 “ liams. John Waller gave a public charge, and the
 “ whole association gave him the right hand of fellow-
 “ ship.”

His work was to pervade the churches to do, or at least to see, to the work of ordination, and to set in order things that were wanting, and to make report to the next association.

The discussion of this subject, caused no little warmth on both sides. Jeremiah Walker first agitated it, and was supported by most of the preachers of popular talents, not without suspicion of vanity and ambition. The opposition was headed by Reuben Ford, followed by a numerous party in the Northern district. Walker wrote a piece upon the subject, entitled *Free Thoughts, &c.* in which, as also in his arguments both in associations and private companies, he very ingeniously maintained, that *all the offices mentioned in the above texts, were still in use.* Mr. Ford also wrote a pamphlet in answer to Mr. Walker's, in which he rebutted his arguments with considerable ability. Both these were read before the association. The majority favouring Mr. Walker's system ; an experiment was made.

At an association holden for the North district, this fall, John Waller and E. Craig, were appointed apostles, for the North side of the river.

It is sufficient to inform our readers, that this scheme did not succeed. Either the spirit of free government ran too high among the churches, to submit to such an officer ; or the thing was wrong in itself ; and, not being from God, soon fell. These apostles made their report to the next association, rather in discouraging terms ; and no others ever were appointed.

The judicious reader, will quickly discover, that this is only the old plan of bishops, &c. under a new name.

In the last decision, it was agreed that the office of apostles, like that of prophets, was the effect of miraculous inspiration, and did not belong to ordinary times.

Both the associations of this fall, appointed their next session to be holden at Manakin town, or Dover meeting house, the 4th Saturday in May 1775.

May 27th, 1775.--- Both associations met by their delegates, at Dover meeting house. Letters from sixty churches were received, viz. 29 from the North, and 31 from the South side of James River.

Samuel Harriss was chosen Moderator, and John Waller and John Williams, Clerks. Only about 300, for both districts, are numbered, as having been baptized since the last association. This number, compared with what had been for years previously, proves that cold times were now, not only appearing, but actually arrived. The events which occurred at this, and the succeeding session, prove it more certainly.

The following query, first occupied their attention.

“Is salvation, by Christ, made possible for every individual of the human race?”

The debate on this query took up the whole of Monday. Every thinking man in the association felt himself seriously interested. Most of them spoke to it, more or less. The weight of talents and of influence seems to have been on the Arminian side. Samuel Harriss, Jeremiah Walker, John Waller, and many other distinguished preachers, stood forward, and zealously, as well as ably, supported the argument in favour of universal provision.

Talents and ingenuity were not wanting on the other side. Wm. Murphy, John Williams and E. Craig, stood foremost in favour of a Calvinistic solution.... These, supported by truth, or at least by the more generally received opinion, among the Baptists, obtained, after a long and animated debate, a small majority. This decision was, on Monday afternoon, immediately before an adjournment. That evening, the Arminian party holding a consultation, determined to bring on the subject again the next day, and to have a determination, whether their opinions upon this point, should be a matter of bar to fellowship and commu-

nion. On Tuesday, when they met, the business became very distressing. The Arminian party, having the Moderator with them, withdrew out of doors. The other side also withdrew, and chose John Williams as Moderator. Every thing was then done by message, sometimes in writing, and sometimes verbally.

After some time spent in this way, the following proposal was made by the Arminian party :

“DEAR BRETHREN,

“A steady union with you, makes us willing to be more explicit, in our answer to your terms of reconciliation proposed. We do not deny the former part of your proposal, respecting particular election of grace, still retaining our liberty, with regard to construction. And as to the latter part, respecting merit in the creature, we are free to profess there is none.

“Signed by Order,

“SAMUEL HARRISS, Moderator.”

To which the other party replied, as follows :

“DEAR BRETHREN,

“Inasmuch as a continuation of your christian fellowship, seems nearly as dear to us as our lives, and seeing our difficulties concerning your principles, with respect to merit in the creature, particular election, and final perseverance of the Saints, are in a hopeful measure removing, we do willingly retain you in fellowship, not raising the least bar. But do heartily wish and pray, that God in his kind providence, in his own time, will bring it about, *when Israel shall all be of one mind, speaking the same things.*

“Signed by Order,

“JOHN WILLIAMS, Moderator.”

These terms being acceded to on both sides, they again met in the meeting house, and resumed their business. Their union was as happy, as their discord had been distressing.

It was determined that the two districts should again unite at their next session, and that that should be at Dupuy's meeting house, Powhatan (then Cumberland) county, the second Saturday in August 1775.

It seems, that one great object of uniting the two districts at this time, was to strive together for the abolition of the hierarchy, or church establishment, in Virginia. The discontents in America, arising from British oppression, were now drawing to a crisis; most of the colonies had determined to resist, and some were for independence. This was a very favourable season for the Baptists. Having been much ground under the British laws, or at least by the interpretation of them in Virginia; they were to a man, favourable to any revolution, by which they could obtain freedom of religion. They had known from experience, that mere toleration was not a sufficient check, having been imprisoned at a time, when that law was considered by many as being in force. It was therefore resolved at this session, to circulate petitions to the Virginia Convention or General Assembly, throughout the state, in order to obtain signatures. The prayer of these was, that the church establishment should be abolished, and religion left to stand upon its own merits: And, that all religious societies should be protected in the peaceable enjoyment of their own religious principles, and modes of worship. They appointed Jeremiah Walker, John Williams and George Roberts, to wait on the legislature with these petitions. They also determined to petition the assembly, for leave to preach to the army, which was granted.

Jeremiah Walker and John Williams being appointed by this association, went and preached to the soldiers, when encamped in the lower parts of Virginia; they, not meeting with much encouragement, declined it, after a short time.

They appointed the next association to be holden at Thompson's meeting house, Louisa county, second Saturday in August 1776.

They met accordingly, and letters from seventy-four churches were received, bringing mournful tidings of coldness and declension. This declension is accounted for by some of the letters, as arising from too much concern in political matters, being about the commencement of the revolution. Others ascribe it to their dissensions about principles, &c. Both, doubtless had their weight. After they met, John Waller was appointed to preach, and took his text I. Cor. 13th and 11th. He had fully embraced the whole Arminian system, and was determined to preach it at every risk. Being called to account before the association, he and all his adherents withdrew from the Baptists, and immediately set up for independence. The result may be seen in his biography. This was an exceedingly sorrowful time. Waller was held high in estimation among the Baptists. Serious consequences might reasonably be expected. The association, however, took such measures as were within their power, to prevent unpleasant effects.

It appears, that it was agreed at this association, to divide into four districts; probably such a division as afterwards took place in 1783, viz. two South, and two North of James River. But as this division was not permanent, we shall pursue the narrative, by attending to the whole under one view, as if no such division had taken place.

The first session for that district, which included Halifax, &c. was holden at Fall's Creek meeting house, Halifax county, first Saturday in November 1776.

Their next session was at Williams' Sandy Creek meeting house, the last Saturday in April 1777. Of these sessions, we could obtain no regular account.

By some means it happened, that the districts were again united, about this time. Being the height of the war, the associations were but thinly attended, and little business done.

Third Saturday in May 1778, a general association was holden at Anderson's meeting house, in Bucking-

ham county. Letters from thirty-two churches were received. Wm. Webber, Moderator ; John Williams, Clerk.

A committee was appointed to enquire whether any grievances existed in the civil laws, that were oppressive to the Baptists. In their report, they represent the marriage law, as being partial and oppressive.--- Upon which, it was agreed to present to the next General Assembly, a memorial praying for a law affording equal privileges to all ordained ministers of every denomination.

They appointed their next association at Dupuy's meeting house, Powhatan county, second Saturday in October 1778.

They met, according to appointment, and chose Samuel Harris, Moderator ; and John Williams, Clerk. Letters from thirty-two churches were read.

A committee of seven members were appointed to take into consideration the civil grievances of the Baptists, and make report.

1st. They reported on Monday, that should a general assessment take place, that it would be injurious to the dissenters in general.

2d. That the clergy of the former established church, suppose themselves to have the exclusive right of officiating in marriages, which has subjected dissenters to great inconveniences.

3d. They therefore recommend, that two persons be appointed to wait on the next General Assembly, and lay these grievances before them.

Jeremiah Walker and Elijah Craig, (and in case of the failure of either,) John Williams, were appointed to attend the General Assembly.

Some rules for the government of associations, were formed at this session.

In consequence of the warm dissentions that had taken place at some of the associations, a few years before this ; combined with the ravages of war ; the associations were not so fully attended, as they had

been. From 60 and 70 churches which usually corresponded, they had fallen to about 30 or 40. It seems that some had contracted unfavourable opinions of associations, and wished them to be laid aside. This subject, being agitated at this session, produced the following entry :

Resolved, That a society of churches combined to seek the mutual good of the whole is desirable : That it also promotes acquaintance among brethren, and affords opportunity to consult, respecting the best modes of counteracting national grievances : But associations are not to interfere with the internal concerns of churches, except where their advice is requested by any church, in the way of query.

The next association appointed the second Saturday in May, at Dover meeting house.

On the second Saturday in May 1779, the association met at Dover meeting house, Goochland county, of which session we have no account.

On the second Saturday in October 1779, the association met at Nottoway meeting house, Amelia county. Samuel Harris, Moderator. Jeremiah Walker, Clerk.

The report by Jeremiah Walker, as delegate to the General Assembly, was highly gratifying, upon which the following entry was unanimously agreed to be made.

“On consideration of the bill establishing religious freedom, agreed : That the said bill, in our opinion, puts religious freedom upon its proper basis ; prescribes the just limits of the power of the state, with regard to religion ; and properly guards against partiality towards any religious denomination ; we, therefore, heartily approve of the same, and wish it to pass into a law.”

Ordered, That this our approbation of the said bill, be transmitted to the public printers, to be inserted in the Gazettes.

It seems that many of the Baptist preachers, presuming upon a future sanction, had gone on to marry

such people as applied for marriage. It was determined that a memorial should be sent from this association, requesting that all such marriages should be sanctioned by a law for that purpose. The law passed accordingly.

For a set of preachers, to proceed to solemnize the rites of matrimony, without any law to authorize them, might at first view appear incorrect, and indeed censurable; but we are informed, that they were advised to this measure, by Mr. Patrick Henry, as being the most certain method of obtaining the law. It succeeded. It is however, still questionable, *whether this was not doing evil, that good might come.*

The next association was holden at Waller's meeting house, Spottsylvania county, the second Saturday in May 1780. No account could be obtained of the proceedings of this session.

The next was appointed to be at Sandy Creek meeting house, Charlotte c'ty, 2d Saturday in October 1780.

They met at the time and place appointed. Samuel Harris, Moderator. John Williams, Clerk. Letters from only 29 churches were received.

From the minutes it appears that some jealousy was still entertained, respecting the power of associations. In consequence of which, an entry is made disavowing any authority over the churches.

A letter was received from a committee of the Regular Baptists, requesting that a similar committee should be appointed by this association, to consider national grievances, in conjunction. This was done accordingly, and Reuben Ford, John Williams and E. Craig, were appointed.

The third Thursday in November following, was appointed a day of fasting and prayer, in consequence of the alarming and distressing times.

The next association appointed at Anderson's meeting house, Buckingham county, second Saturday in May 1781.

They met, according to appointment. About this

time the British, under Lord Cornwallis, were marching through Virginia from the South; and was now at no great distance from the place of the association. On this account there were but 16 churches corresponded. They chose Wm. Webber, Moderator; and J. Williams, Clerk. After making some few arrangements, and appointing the next association at Dover meeting house, Goochland county, the 2d Saturday in October 1782, they adjourned.

They met at Dover meeting house, agreeable to appointment. Letters from 32 corresponding churches were read. Wm. Webber, Moderator. John Williams, Clerk.

Jeremiah Walker was appointed a delegate to attend the next General Assembly, with a memorial and petitions against ecclesiastical oppression.

Robert Stockton attended this association, as a delegate from the Strawberry association.

The large number of churches, and the great distance which many of their delegates had to travel, rendered a general association in Virginia extremely inconvenient; so that they would, probably long before this date, have divided into districts, if they had not been holden together by apprehensions of oppression from civil government.

They could not make head against their powerful and numerous opponents, with any hope of success, unless they were united among themselves. In order to be all of one mind, it was necessary they should all assemble, around one council board. For these reasons, the General Association was kept up, as long as it was. Finding it however, considerably wearisome to collect so many from such distant parts; and having already secured their most important civil rights; they determined to hold only one more General Association, and then dividing into districts, to form some plan, to keep a standing sentinel for political purposes. In order to mature this plan, for dividing into districts, they agreed to have two Spring associations

one on the South side, and one on the North side of James River. To these, it was expected that the churches, on each side, would send delegates to the associations, in their respective districts.

They then proceeded to appoint the association at Dupuy's meeting house, Powhatan county, 2d Saturday in October 1783. The one on the South side, was appointed at Nottoway meeting house, in Nottoway county, the 2d Saturday in May 1783. The one on the North side at Noel's meeting house, in Essex county, the first Saturday in May 1783.

The first Wednesday in November, was appointed a day of fasting and prayer, on account of the prospects of famine, and to avert the judgments of God, on account of the increasing wickedness of the land.

Second Saturday in October 1783, they met in General Association, according to appointment, and for the last time. 37 delegates, including most of the active preachers in Virginia, were present. Wm. Webber, Moderator. John Williams, Clerk.

The following business was transacted in this association:

Resolved, That our General or Annual Association cease, and that a general committee be instituted, composed of not more than four delegates from each district association, to meet annually, to consider matters that may be for the good of the whole society, and that the present association be divided into four districts: Upper and Lower District, on each side of James River.

A motion was made by John Williams: That as they were now about to divide into sections, they ought to adopt some confession of faith, by way of affording a standard of principles to subsequent times.

They then agreed to adopt the Philadelphia confession of faith, upon the following explanations:

“To prevent its usurping a tyrannical power, over the consciences of any: We do not mean that every person is to be bound to the strict observance of eve-

ry thing therein contained, nor do we mean to make it, in any respect, superiour or equal to the scriptures, in matters of faith and practice; although we think it the best human composition of the kind now extant; yet it shall be liable to alterations, whenever the General Committee, in behalf of the associations, shall think fit."

Reuben Ford and John Waller, were appointed delegates to wait on the General Assembly, with a memorial. Then dissolved.

CHAPTER VI.

Containing a History of the General Committee, from their first session, until their dissolution in 1799.

CIRCUMSTANCED as the Baptists were at this period, it would have been the height of folly, to have dissolved the general association, without substituting some other assembly, capable of consulting and devising measures, for the benefit of the whole connexion. In most respects a meeting composed of representatives from the different associations, was preferable to the general association. Being a small number, they could act more promptly; they would have fewer local matters, and could therefore devote their attention more intently to those of general concern; and lastly, there being three other associations now in the state, besides the one called the General Association; these could unite in a General Committee, and contribute their aid, in measures interesting to all.

The General Committee accordingly met, for the first time on Saturday, October 9th, 1784. Delegates from four associations assembled. Wm. Webber was appointed Moderator; and Reuben Ford, Clerk.

Of the plan of government, the following are the only articles proper to be noticed.

1. The general committee shall be composed of delegates, sent from all the district associations, that desire to correspond with each other.

2. No association shall be represented in the general committee, by more than four delegates.

3. The committee thus composed, shall consider all the political grievances of the whole Baptist society in Virginia, and all references from the district associations, respecting matters which concern the Baptist society at large.

4. No petition, memorial or remonstrance, shall be presented to the general assembly from any association in connexion with the general committee.—All things of that kind shall originate with the general committee.

Under this constitution they proceeded to business.

The law for the solemnization of marriage, and the vestry law, were considered political grievances.

They also resolved to oppose the law for a general assessment, and that for the incorporation of religious societies, which were now in agitation.*

A memorial to the general assembly praying for a repeal of the vestry law, and for an alteration in the marriage law, was drawn and committed to the hands of the Rev. Reuben Ford, to be presented to the next assembly.

Saturday, August 13, 1785.—The general committee met a second time at Dupuy's meeting house, Powhatan county. Delegates from four associations were present. Wm. Webber was chosen Moderator; and Reuben Ford, clerk.†

Reuben Ford reported, that according to the directions given him, he presented a memorial and petition to the Honorable General Assembly: That they

* It may be proper here to inform the reader, that the remonstrances sent to the General Assembly by the Baptists, about this time, were against certain oppressive laws, made subsequent to the bill establishing religious freedom, mentioned in page 65.

† Except a few sessions of the General Committee. William Webber acted as Moderator, and Reuben Ford as clerk, until the meeting was dissolved.

met with a favourable reception ; that certain amendments were made to the marriage law, which he thought satisfactory.

To this report, the general committee concurred.

They were further informed, that at the last session of the general assembly, a bill for a general assessment was introduced, and had almost passed into a law ; but when at that stage, in which it is called an engrossed bill, a motion was made and carried, that it should be referred to the next assembly, in order to give the people an opportunity to consider it.

The general committee, as guardians of the rights of the Virginia Baptists, of course took up the subject, and came to the following resolution :

Resolved, That it be recommended to those counties, which have not yet prepared petitions, to be presented to the general assembly, against the engrossed bill for a general assessment for the support of the teachers of the Christian religion, to proceed thereon, as soon as possible : That it is believed to be repugnant to the spirit of the gospel, for the legislature thus to proceed in matters of religion : that no human laws ought to be established for this purpose ; but that every person ought to be left entirely free, in respect to matters of religion : that the holy author of our religion, needs no such compulsive measures for the promotion of his cause : that the gospel, wants not the feeble arm of man for its support : that it has made, and will again through divine power, make its way against all opposition : and that, should the legislature assume the right of taxing the people for the support of the gospel, it will be destructive to religious liberty.

Therefore, This committee agrees unanimously, that it will be expedient to appoint a delegate to wait on the general assembly, with a remonstrance and petition against such assessment.

Accordingly, the Rev. Reuben Ford was appointed.

It was then consulted, whether it would not be de-

sirable to establish among the Baptists some uniform mode for the solemnization of marriage. Upon which, it was resolved to adopt and recommend the form laid down in the common prayer book, leaving out a few exceptionable parts ; and that it be printed, together with the catechism entitled *Milk for Babes*.*

Saturday, August 5, 1786.—The next general committee was holden at Anderson's meeting house, Buckingham county. Delegates from five associations assembled.

Reuben Ford, who was appointed to wait upon the assembly, with a memorial and petition against the bill for a general assessment ; *Reported*, That he waited on the house of assembly according to appointment ; that the law for assessment did not pass ; but, on the contrary, an act passed explaining the nature of religious liberty.

This law, so much admired for the lucid manner, in which it treats of, and explains religious liberty, was drawn by the venerable Mr. Thomas Jefferson.

It may be found in the 29th page of the Revised Code of the Virginia laws.

The committee concurred in the report, and declared themselves well pleased with the law above mentioned.

Here let us remark, that the inhibition of the general assessment, may in a considerable degree, be ascribed to the opposition made to it by the Baptists : for it is stated by those who were conversant with the proceedings of those times, that the reference made to the people, after the bill was engrossed, was done with a design to give the different religious societies an opportunity of expressing their wishes. The Baptists, we believe, were the only sect who plainly remonstrated. Of some others, it is said, that the laity and ministry were at variance upon the subject, so

* It is much to be deplored that this, or some other form of religious instruction for children, has not been in more common use among the Baptists.

as to paralyze their exertions either for or against the bill. These remarks, by the by, apply only to religious societies, acting as such. Individuals of all sects and parties joined in the opposition.

The general committee then went into the consideration of a law for the incorporation of the Episcopal society, and thereby vesting certain property in them. Upon this subject they *Resolved*, That petitions ought to be drawn and circulated in the different counties, and presented to the next general assembly, praying for a repeal of the incorporating act, and that the public property which is by that act vested in the Protestant Episcopal Church be sold, and the money applied to public use, and that Reuben Ford and John Leland attend the next assembly, as agents in behalf of the general committee.

The schism which took place among the Regular and Separate Baptists, soon after their rise in Virginia, had never been, as yet, entirely removed, although a very friendly intercourse had been occasionally kept up among them.

The time was now at hand when all differences and party spirit was about to be forever wiped off. The Ketoc-ton or Regular Baptist Association, sent delegates to this general committee, and they were received upon equal footing with those from the other associations. This gave rise to the following recommendation :

“ It is recommended to the different associations to appoint delegates, to attend the next General Committee, for the purpose of forming an union with the Regular Baptists.”

Friday, August 10, 1787.—The fourth session of the general committee was holden at Dover meeting house in Goochland county. Delegates from six associations assembled.*

* There were only six associations at this time in the state, so that they were all represented.

The Rev. Messrs. Ford and Leland, who were appointed to wait on the general assembly, *Reported*, That according to their instructions, they presented a memorial praying for a repeal of the incorporating act: that the memorial was received by the honorable house, and that, that part of the said act, which respected the incorporation of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as a religious society, and marking out the rules of their procedure, was repealed; but that, that part which respected the glebes, &c. remained as it was.

Whereupon, the question was put whether the general committee viewed the glebes, &c. as public property....By a majority of one they decided that they were. They did not however, at this time, send any memorial to the general assembly.

Agreeable to appointment, the subject of the union of Regular and Separate Baptists, was taken up; and a happy and effectual reconciliation was accomplished.

The objections on the part of the Separates, related chiefly to matters of trivial importance, and had been for some time removed, as to being a bar of communion. On the other hand, the Regulars complained, that the Separates were not sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published or sanctioned any confession of faith; and that they kept within their communion, many who were professed Arminians, &c. To these things, it was answered by the Separates, that a large majority of them, believed as much, in their confession of faith, as they did themselves, although they did not entirely approve of the practice of religious societies, binding themselves too strictly by confessions of faith, seeing there was danger of their finally usurping too high a place: that if there were some among them, who leaned too much towards the Arminian system, they were generally men of exemplary piety, and great usefulness in the Redeemer's kingdom; and they conceived it

better to bear with some diversity of opinion in doctrines, than to break with men, whose christian deportment, rendered them amiable in the estimation of all true lovers of genuine godliness. Indeed, that some of them had now become fathers in the gospel, who previous to the bias which their minds had received, had borne the brunt and heat of persecution, whose labours and sufferings God had blessed, and still blessed, to the great advancement of his cause: To exclude such as these from their communion, would be like tearing the limbs from the body.

These and such like arguments, were agitated both in public and private, so that all minds were much mollified, before the final and successful attempt for union.

The terms of the union were entered on the minutes in the following words, viz.

“ The committee appointed to consider the terms of union with our Regular Brethren, *Reported*; that they conceive the manner in which the Regular Baptist confession of faith has been received by a former association, is the ground-work for such union.”

After considerable debate, as to the propriety of having any confession of faith at all, the report of the committee was received with the following explanation:

“ To prevent the confession of faith from usurping a tyrannical power over the conscience of any, we do not mean, that every person is bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained; yet that it holds forth the essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ and free unmerited grace alone, ought to be believed by every christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel. Upon these terms we are united; and desire hereafter that the names Regular and Separate, be buried in oblivion; and that, from henceforth, we shall be known by the name of the *United Baptist Churches of Christ, in Virginia.*”

This union has now (1809,) continued upwards of 22 years, without any interruption. The bands of union, are apparently much stronger than at first. It is quite pleasing sometimes to find, that members and even ministers of intelligence, among the Baptists, have manifested a total unacquaintance with the terms Regular and Separate, when they have been occasionally mentioned in their company. From this, it is plain that all party spirit is now laid aside, and that it was a union of hearts as well as parties.

It is worthy of remark, that this conjunction of dis-severed brethren, took place at a time, when a great revival of religion had already commenced, and not far from the time, when it should burst forth on the right hand and on the left, throughout the state.—Some of our reflecting readers, will impute this to a providential interference of God, disposing the hearts of his people to love and peace, in order to prepare them for the day of his power. Others will say, rather the work having already begun, a revival of true religion always tends to open the hearts of the friends of God, and makes them stretch the robe of charity, so as really to cover a multitude of faults. Whether to the one, or to the other, or to both these causes, may be ascribed, the accommodating temper of the two parties; certain it is, that nothing could be more salutary. The ointment poured upon Aaron's head, was not more savoury: The dew on Hermon, was not more fructifying, than is the union of brethren, it is there, even where love reigns, that the Lord commands his blessing, life eternal, life for ever more.

The next general committee met at Williams's meeting house, Goochland county, Friday the 7th of March 1778. Delegates from four associations attended.

The religious political subjects, which were taken up at this session, were:

1st. Whether the new federal constitution, which had now lately made its appearance in public, made

sufficient provision for the secure enjoyment of religious liberty; on which, it was agreed unanimously, that, in the opinion of the general committee, it did not.

2d. Whether a petition shall be offered to the next general assembly, praying for the sale of the vacant glebes.

After much deliberation on this subject, it was finally determined, that petitions should be presented to the next general assembly, asking the sale of the vacant glebes, as being public property; and accordingly, four persons were chosen from the general committee to present their memorial, viz. Eli Clay, Reuben Ford, John Waller and John Williams.*

3d. Whether a petition should be offered to the general assembly, praying that the yoke of slavery may be made more tolerable. Referred to the next session.

It appears from the minutes of this session, that letters had been received from the Revd. Asa Hunt, of Massachusetts, and the Revd. Lemuel Powers, of New-York state, proposing a correspondence between the General Committee and the Northern associations, to which proposal the general committee readily agreed, and appointed Mr. Leland to visit as many of them, as he could conveniently. Letters of correspondence were also prepared. Hopes were entertained by some, about this time, of forming a general meeting, to be composed of delegates from all the states in the union. Such a plan, however desirable, was never put into practice.

The first proposal for publishing *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, was made at this session.

The next session of the general committee was at Dupuy's meeting house, August the 11th, 1788. Delegates from five associations attended.

* The memorial was presented, and similar memorials and petitions continued to be presented to the legislature from the general committee until 1799, when they gained their object.

The question whether a memorial should be sent to the general assembly at their next session, respecting the glebe lands, was taken up, *Whereupon*, it was resolved, that the business should be entrusted to the care of Elders Leland, Waller and Clay, to be left discretionary in them, to present a memorial or not, as they may think best. On examining the papers directed to the general committee at this session, it was found that a letter was received from the Rev. James Manning, President of Providence college in Rhode-Island, recommending and encouraging the Baptists of Virginia, to erect a seminary of learning. This subject was, of course taken up, and they came to the following decision, viz.

Resolved, That a committee of five persons on each side of James River, be appointed to forward the business respecting a seminary of learning; accordingly Samuel Harris, John Williams, Eli Clay, Simeon Walton and David Barrow, were appointed on the South; and Robert Carter, John Waller, Wm. Frisbie, John Leland and Reuben Ford, on the North side of said river.

Resolved, That Samuel Harris, John Williams, Simeon Walton, John Leland, Henry Toler and Lewis Lunsford, be appointed to collect materials for compiling and publishing a *History of the Baptists in Virginia*, and report to the next general committee.

The next general committee met in Richmond, August the 8th, 1789. Delegates from 7 associations met. Samuel Harris, Moderator. Reuben Ford, Clerk.

At this session, letters and minutes of correspondence were received from various quarters. The usefulness of the general committee, in keeping up a correspondence and intercourse among the Baptists throughout the United States, was inconceivable. From Georgia to Massachusetts they were known, and received occasionally from some, and statedly from others, letters, minutes and other indications of fellowship. So

hat, if a general union of men, embarked in the same heavenly cause, could be esteemed desirable, then ought we to esteem the general committee as an institution founded in wisdom.

The committee for the promotion of a seminary of learning, appointed last year, was continued, with the alteration of a few persons.

Sundry persons were also added, to those appointed last year, for the collection of documents, for printing *a History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*.

The propriety of hereditary slavery, was also taken up at this session, and after some time employed in the consideration of the subject, the following resolution was offered by Mr. Leland, and adopted :

Resolved, That slavery is a violent deprivation of the rights of nature, and inconsistent with a republican government, and therefore recommend it to our brethren, to make use of every legal measure to extirpate this horrid evil from the land ; and pray Almighty God that our honorable legislature may have it in their power to proclaim the great Jubilee, consistent with the principles of good policy.

Those who had formerly gone under the name of Regulars, sent a letter to this general committee, remonstrating against some things licensed among that part of the Baptists formerly called Separates.

To which an answer was sent by the general committee, which proved satisfactory.

At this general committee, was Joshua Barnes a preacher, who was born blind. As the God of nature would be merciful, whenever he deprives any of his creatures of one natural endowment, he commonly doubles their capacity in something else. Mr. Barnes probably possessed the most singularly retentive memory, as to any thing he heard, especially what was read to him, of any other man living. He would preach a long sermon, and quote an uncommon number of texts of scripture, to prove his points, of which he would

always tell both chapter and verse. He was an excellent preacher and a very pious man. He was a native and resident of North Carolina, but travelled much in Virginia. He died in the year 1796.

The select committee appointed to collect materials for compiling *a History of the Baptists in Virginia*, Reported, That they had proceeded so far therein, as to find a foundation laid, for entering on the said work,

Resolved therefore, That the Rev. John Leland and John Williams, be recommended by the general committee to engage in compiling the said history, and that the brethren hitherto engaged in collecting materials, do furnish the said compilers as far as they can, and that the profits arising from the work, be wholly to the compilers.

The business respecting seminaries of learning, was referred to the next general committee.

The next general committee met at Nuckol's meeting house, Goochland county, May the 14th, 1791. Delegates from seven associations were enrolled.

The first business in which they engaged was to consider whether they had not departed from their former plan. This question produced a long debate. It was determined that they had deviated from their original plan; that the original design of the general committee was, only to consider religious political grievances, and to seek for redress. *Resolved therefore*, that that part of the 3d article, which contains these words: "*And all references from the district associations, respecting matters that may concern the whole body,*" be struck out.

Considering, that neither associations nor the general committee ever pretended to any thing more, than the power of giving advice; this decision was certainly very injudicious. What possible mischief, it may be asked, could arise from receiving references from the associations, respecting matters of a general nature.--- It would seem, to an impartial mind, to be the surest road to uniformity, and consequently to harmony and

peace. This decision, or something else, proved fatal to the rising prosperity of the general committee. For from that session, it began to decline, and so continued until it was finally dissolved in the year 1799.

Having thus cramped themselves, they proceeded to the consideration of other matters. The memorial against the glebes, &c. was the only business before them.

This session of the general committee was the fullest, and the most respectable of any that had ever been holden in Virginia: There being an assemblage of the greatest Baptist preachers, residing within the state; besides two or three from Georgia, who in point of talents, might be honourably compared with any, in any part of the world. These were the Rev. Silas Mercer and the Rev. Jeremiah Walker; of the latter of whom, much has already been said. These two men, although agreed upon the point of baptism, and therefore both Baptists, were much at variance, upon the doctrines of free will, and free grace; or as they are sometimes, by way of distinction called, Calvinism and Arminianism. Mr. Mercer was a decided Calvinist, and Mr. Walker, as decided an Arminian; though it must be confessed, that neither of them carried their system to such extremes, as they have been carried by many. Mr. Mercer denied the doctrine of eternal reprobation, and Mr. Walker acknowledged that of imputed righteousness. In the general committee each had a respectable party, tho' the Calvinistic side was much the largest. It is hard to say, which of the two had the advantage, in point of talents. They were both, men of superlative original genius, and neither had the advantage of a classical education. To remedy the defect of which, each of them had applied himself to reading, though at somewhat a late period of life, and it is not easy to determine which of the two was most advanced in the knowledge of books. As it respected address, either in, or out of the pulpit, Walker had greatly the

superiority. His manners in private companies, were exceedingly attaching. Gentle, affable, polite; cheerful yet grave, familiar yet dignified; he was, in a word, every thing that could encourage the backward, or soothe the irritable. His conversation was sensible, and judiciously adapted, to those with whom he was conversing. He was by no means urgent or positive, in supporting his opinions, but would ply his competitor with strong arguments, as if they were pearls thrown before him, which he might gather up as his own, or leave them; and it is probable, few men could make gewgaws look more like jewels, than Jeremiah Walker: his was a sweetened dose. In the pulpit, although Walker possessed but little rhetorical fire, (at least in his last days), yet he was singularly entertaining. When Walker preached, there were few listless hearers.

Mercer, on the other hand, both in his countenance and manners, had considerably the appearance of sternness; and to feel quite free in his company, it was necessary to be well acquainted with him. He seldom talked on any other subject, except religion, and when in company with young preachers, or those who might question his doctrine or his opinions, his remarks chiefly turned on polemical points. He was indefatigable in striving to maintain his points, and for this purpose would hear any, and all objections, that could be raised, and would then labour assiduously to remove them. His arguments, however, neither in private nor public, were ever dressed with oratorical ornaments. He did not aim at it. Indeed he did not seem to wish it. He spoke and acted like one, who felt himself surrounded by the impregnable bulwarks of truth, and therefore, did not wish to parley. Regardless of the mountings of his armour, his whole attention was occupied in wielding it well, and in assuring himself and others, that it was made of durable metal. He seemed to be fearful of hurting the real splendour of his diamonds, by

a fictitious glistening. Having thus shortly pourtrayed these two men, as they appeared to us when in Virginia in '91, we will give some account of their measures to support their opinions, while with us. Mercer being on the popular side, was chosen to preach on Sunday. Walker, with some difficulty, obtained leave to preach on Monday. Mercer went fully into the arguments tending to illustrate and prove his system. He was masterly indeed. He spoke, as one having authority. His sermon, left deep and durable impressions. Walker also defended his principles, in an ingenious and masterly manner. Feeling himself measurably pressed down, by the popular current, he could not display the same bold and commanding spirit, as his competitor felt: He was however by no means deficient in close and forcible arguments. From the general committee, they both travelled and preached extensively, through the state, creating wherever they went, much conversation and agitation of mind among the people. Walker published a pamphlet, entitled, "*The fourfold foundation of Calvinism examined, and shaken.*" It was certainly no mean performance, and was thought to have made temporary impressions upon many strong Calvinists. Mercer also had books upon the contested points, but not of his own composition. The ultimate consequence of this investigation of principles, was, a decrease of Arminianism among the Baptists of Virginia, and a much greater uniformity in the doctrines of grace. Some were thought also, after these events, to have pushed the Calvinistic scheme, to an Antinomian extreme.

Their next meeting was at Tomahawk meeting-house, Chesterfield county, May 12th, 1792. Delegates from nine associations met.

It was now made a question, whether the last general committee had not cramped themselves by the amendment to the constitution, in the third article. In order to decide this point, a committee was ap-

pointed to frame a solution which after some amendments, was in the following words, viz.

“ After maturely deliberating on a variety of circumstances, your committee suppose that the business of the general committee is to consider all the political grievances of the whole Baptist society in Virginia, and all references from associations; as also other circumstances, which evidently relate to the external interest of the whole body of Baptists, and no other concerns whatever.”

This explanation of the power of the general committee is certainly very obscure. It is still doubtful how far their power extended, seeing various constructions might be put upon the import of the words *external interest*. But the most obvious impropriety exists, in the proceedings both of this and the last general committee, upon this subject. The general committee for '91, alters the constitution by which she exists. That of '92 alters it again, and almost if not altogether, brings it back in *statu quo*. Now, it may be asked, can it be proper for any assembly who derive their power, not from themselves, but from some other source, to abridge or enlarge those powers, without consulting those, from whence they originated. The constitution having been, either directly or indirectly sanctioned, by all the associations who compose the general committee, no alteration could rightly be made, without their approbation. If it were otherwise, it would be perfectly needless to have any constitution, as they would be no longer bound by any part, offensive to themselves, than the time it would take to alter it. Frequent changes, in any institution, invariably tends to lessen its stability.

The old question, respecting the glebes and churches, as it was generally called, of course was taken up, and fell into its usual channel.

At this session several books designed for publication, were offered to the general committee, in order to obtain their sanction. This was granted. This is

one, of many ways, in which such a meeting might be useful. To bring a book, designed for publication, immediately before a public assembly, in order to gain their approbation, would be impracticable; but a general meeting might be useful, by appointing a standing committee, for the purpose of examining any thing intended for the press, which directly concerns the honour and interests of the Baptists. This select committee might make a report, stating the outlines of the book, according to which the general meeting could properly give, or withhold their recommendation; this would probably, on the one hand, give currency to such tracts as possess merit; while, on the other hand, it might happily suppress such, as would do injury to the cause of God and truth.

The general committee continued to be holden, at the usual time of year, at the following places, viz. 1793 at Muddy creek meeting house, Powhatan county. 1794 at Winns' meeting house, Hanover county. 1795 at Roundabout meeting house, Louisa county. 1796 at Dupuy's meeting house, Powhatan county. 1797 at Upper King & Queen meeting house, King & Queen county. 1798 at Buckingham Old Church, Buckingham county. 1799 at Waller's meeting house, Spottsylvania county, where they agreed to dissolve. During this period, an unreasonable jealousy, of their exercising too much power, was often manifested, both by associations, and individuals. This, added to some other causes, produced a gradual declension in the attendance of members, as well as a nerveless languor, in the transaction of business. The remonstrance respecting glebes, &c. was the only business which excited no jealousies, and that was the only matter which was ever completed after the year 1792.

The business respecting a *Seminary of Learning*, was in 1793, committed to the hands of the Rev. John Williams and Mr. Thomas Read, of Charlotte, who reported the following plan: That 14 trustees

be appointed, all of whom shall be Baptists : That these at their first meeting, appoint seven others of some other religious denomination : That the whole 21, then form a plan, and make arrangements for executing it. This scheme was proceeded in, so far as to appoint the whole of the trustees, who had one or two meetings, in which advances were made towards maturing the plan. But apprehensive that they should not be able to procure sufficient funds, with some other discouragements, they finally abandoned it.

The compilation of a history of the Virginia Baptists, having been committed wholly to the hands of Mr. Williams after Mr. Leland's removal ; he had made no inconsiderable progress in collecting documents, when in consequence of the decline of his health, he found himself under the necessity of resigning his trust. This he did, in a letter to the general committee, in 1794. The committee received his resignation, and resolved to decline it for the present.

The last act of the general committee was to recommend to the associations to form a plan for a general meeting of correspondence, to promote and preserve union and harmony among the churches. Of which meeting, a short account may be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Origin and History of the General Meeting of Correspondence, until the present time.

May 1800.—Delegates met at Liles's meeting house from several associations, for the double purpose of revising the confession of faith, and as a convention to form a constitution for a general meeting. The business was committed to a select committee. On Monday morning, the constitution as prepared by the

select committee, was reported and received. The great jealousy which had been expressed by the associations respecting the general committee, put the Convention so much upon their guard, that in forming the constitution, they almost gave them nothing to do. Their business, if it could properly be called the business of a meeting, was to collect and publish useful pieces, somewhat in the nature of a magazine, which was to be sold to defray its own expence. The advantages resulting from a general intercourse of the associations in Virginia, were so obvious, that its friends were willing to have a meeting, upon any terms which would accomplish that end. It must have been foreseen, that unless they could be employed in something which might be thought beneficial, the meetings would be but thinly attended. But few could be found willing to travel long distances, without having any other business, except that of seeing each other, and communicating the good or evil tidings, which every one brought with him. Accordingly, the meetings were attended, but by few, for several years. Only three associations, viz. Dover, Goshen, and Albemarle, adopted the constitution, at first.—When they met from year to year, nothing being prepared for the press, little else was done than to regulate the internal concerns of the meeting, and appoint the time and place of the next. So dragged on the General Meeting of Correspondence, until May 1807, when they met at Buckingham Old Church, in Buckingham county. Delegates from four associations met (Appommattox having fallen in). Likewise the Roanoke sent a messenger to gain information, not having as yet determined. This meeting, finding from experience, the improbability of ever carrying the first constitution into effect, resolved to form a new one;* such as they in their judgments, believed to be for the good of the cause, and not merely with

* By this constitution they could take up any matter, previously decided on, in any association.

a view to adapting it to the suspicious minds of a few leading characters, who were perhaps actuated from upright, though mistaken motives. In order to give full time for the investigation of this new constitution, the next general meeting was fixed on the 4th Saturday in October 1808.

Accordingly, on the above date, the General Meeting assembled at Bethel meeting house, in Chesterfield county. Six associations had adopted the new constitution, and had sent their delegates, viz. Dover, Goshen, Albemarle, Appomattox, Roanoke and Meherrin.

The former Moderator being absent, by death, Robert B. Semple was chosen Moderator, and Reuben Ford, Clerk.

The general meeting took up the following business: The propriety of offering an address to Mr. Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, who, having served his country faithfully for many years, was now about to retire from public life. The address was unanimously voted, and sent on; to which the President returned an immediate answer. (*See this address and the answer in Appendix.*) It also appeared from some late publications, that the Baptists in Virginia had been misrepresented, as to their sentiments respecting human learning. It was determined, at this meeting, to rebut this calumny, by publishing a few remarks on that subject, in the form of a circular letter, which was accordingly done. The Philadelphia association, some small time before this, had published their centural sermon. The author* of which had written on, that he had reserved 150 or 200 copies of that sermon, for the disposal of the general meeting, as a present to them. At this meeting, harmony and peace reigned. The preaching and the public exercises generally, appeared to have the divine smiles. It was an encouraging meeting.

* Samuel Jones.

The next General Meeting of Correspondence was holden at Tarwallet meeting house, October 28th, &c. 1809. Delegates from five associations assembled.*

The same Moderator and Clerk were chosen as last year.

Two subjects were brought forward at this meeting, which if ever matured, must greatly conduce to the future happiness of the Baptists, as a religious society. The religious education of children, and the establishment of some seminary or public school, to assist young preachers to acquire literary knowledge.

The first was disposed of by recommending to parents the use of catechisms, and especially one lately published, for the use of the Baptist society; and the other, by appointing two persons, to acquire information, and digest a plan for such a seminary.

*The Constitution of the General Meeting of Correspondence, had now been adopted by a majority of associations in the state; but, from some cause, several failed to meet.

TABLE OF THE DOVER ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Dover, | 1773 | 45 | 275 | <i>S. Harris, J. Read, J. Waller & others.</i> | <i>W. Webber.</i> | | Goochland |
| Goochland, | 1771 | 75 | 200 | <i>S. Harris, J. Read and J. Waller.</i> | <i>R. Ford.</i> | <i>R. Ford.</i> | do. |
| Hopeful, | 1807 | 174 | 180 | <i>Reuben Ford.</i> | <i>R. Ford.</i> | <i>R. Ford.</i> | Hanover, |
| Chickahominy | 1776 | 50 | 240 | <i>J. Waller, S. Harris, J. Read.</i> | <i>J. Clay, R. Ford & W. Webber.</i> | <i>B. Bowles.</i> | do. |
| Hungry, | 1791 | 40 | 100 | <i>S. Harris, J. Read and J. Waller.</i> | <i>Several supplies, no pastor at first.</i> | <i>B Reynolds</i> | Henrico. |
| City of Richmond, | 1780 | 14 | 560 | <i>J. Morris.</i> | <i>J. Morris.</i> | <i>J. Courtney</i> | do. |
| Boar Swamp, | | | 90 | <i>E. Baker.</i> | <i>Austin.</i> | | do. |
| Four Mile, | | | 248 | <i>E. Baker.</i> | <i>J. Lindsey.</i> | <i>J. Lindsey.</i> | do. |
| Charles City, | 1776 | 20 | 217 | <i>E. Baker.</i> | <i>J. Bradley.</i> | <i>W. Clopton.</i> | Charles City. |
| Black Creek, | 1777 | 12 | 200 | <i>J. Clay.</i> | <i>W Barnes, T. Courtney</i> | <i>J. Turner.</i> | New-Kent & Hanover |
| James City, | 1773 | 30 | 96 | <i>J. Anthony & E. Baker.</i> | <i>J. Goodall.</i> | | James City |
| Williamsburg, | 1791 | 330 | 600 | <i>G. Pamphlet.</i> | <i>G Pamphlet</i> | | do. |
| Grafton, | 1777 | 22 | 497 | <i>E. Baker.</i> | <i>J. Wright.</i> | <i>J. Gayle.</i> | York and Warwick, |
| Hampton, | 1791 | 90 | 305 | <i>J. Wright.</i> | | <i>R. Hurst.</i> | Elizabeth City, |
| Reeds, | 1773 | 16 | 267 | <i>S. Harris, J. Read.</i> | <i>J. Young.</i> | <i>J. Self.</i> | Caroline. |
| Tuckaho, | 1774 | | 219 | <i>L. Craig.</i> | <i>J. Shackelford.</i> | <i>J. Sorrel.</i> | do. |
| Salem, | 1802 | 88 | 106 | <i>T. Noel.</i> | <i>T. Noel.</i> | | do. |
| U. College, | 1775 | 12 | 250 | <i>J. Young.</i> | <i>J Courtney, W Breding</i> | | King William. |

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>L. College,</i> | 1792 | 166 | 310 | <i>J. Courtney and others.</i> | <i>J. Mill.</i> | <i>J. Mill.</i> | do. |
| <i>Upper King and Queen,</i> | 1774 | 25 | 257 | <i>L. Craig.</i> | <i>Y. Pitts.</i> | <i>T. Noel.</i> | King and Queen. |
| <i>Braington,</i> | 1790 | 150 | 300 | <i>J. Greenwood</i> | <i>R. B. Semple.</i> | <i>R. B. Semple.</i> | do. |
| <i>Exol,</i> | 1775 | 30 | 228 | <i>J. Walker.</i> | <i>I. Lewis.</i> | <i>I. Lewis.</i> | do. |
| <i>Lower King & Queen,</i> | 1772 | 17 | 147 | <i>J. Waller.</i> | <i>R. Ware.</i> | <i>W. Todd.</i> | do. |
| <i>Pocorone,</i> | 1807 | 100 | 92 | <i>R. Ware.</i> | <i>J. Healey.</i> | <i>J. Healey.</i> | do. |
| <i>Upper Essex,</i> | 1772 | 40 | 280 | <i>L. Craig.</i> | <i>T. Noel.</i> | <i>Various supplies.</i> | Essex. |
| <i>Piscataway,</i> | 1774 | 11 | 229 | <i>J. Waller.</i> | <i>J. Greenwood.</i> | <i>J. Greenwood.</i> | do. |
| <i>Glebe landing</i> | 1772 | 20 | 284 | <i>J. Waller.</i> | <i>W. Mullin.</i> | <i>J. Lewis.</i> | Essex and Middlesex. |
| <i>Hermitage,</i> | 1789 | 346 | 236 | <i>J. Waller.</i> | <i>J. Mullin, J. Healey.</i> | | do. |
| <i>Zoar,</i> | 1808 | 100 | 99 | <i>J. Mullin.</i> | <i>D. Corey.</i> | | Middlesex. |
| <i>Gloucester, or Pettsworth,</i> | 1790 | 88 | 283 | <i>I. Lewis.</i> | <i>R. Hudgins, W. Lemon.</i> | | Gloucester |
| <i>Abingdon,</i> | 1801 | 200 | 268 | <i>I. Lewis.</i> | <i>R. Stacy.</i> | <i>R. Stacy.</i> | do. |
| <i>Mathews,</i> | 1775 | | 430 | <i>I. Lewis.</i> | <i>D. Tinsley, J. Gage.</i> | <i>W. Fitchet.</i> | Mathews. |
| <i>Hanover,</i> | 1789 | 93 | 256 | <i>J. Shackelford & others.</i> | <i>J. Davis.</i> | <i>J. Davis.</i> | K. George. |
| <i>Nomony,</i> | 1786 | 17 | 875 | <i>H. Toler and L. Lunsford.</i> | <i>H. Toler.</i> | <i>H. Toler.</i> | Westmoreland. |
| <i>Farnham,</i> | 1790 | 80 | 60 | <i>J. Greenwood & W. Mullin.</i> | <i>W. Mullin, B. Philips.</i> | | Richmond. |
| <i>Wicomoco,</i> | 1804 | 20 | 268 | <i>L. Lunsford.</i> | <i>S Straughn</i> | <i>S Straughn</i> | Northumberland. |
| <i>Moratico,</i> | 1778 | 14 | 261 | <i>L. Lunsford.</i> | <i>L. Lunsford & J. Creath</i> | <i>S Straughn</i> | Lancaster. |

The blanks in the 7th column mean, no Pastor. In all the rest they mean, that the matter was unknown.

In the above and all the tables of the associations, there are a few cases, in which no positive information could be had ; particularly respecting the time of the constitution of churches, and their number at constitution. In such cases, our informants made their statements to the best of their recollection.



CHAPTER IX.

The History of the Proceedings of the Dover Association, from the division of the General Association, until the present time

IN our history of the General Association, the reader will find, that in 1783, they divided into four districts, of which two were on the South, and two on the North side of James River, called the Lower and Upper Districts, &c. fixing the boundaries on the North side, from Manakin Town, on James River, in a straight line by Fredericksburg to the Potomack. The two on the North side, it appears, agreed to meet together once a year, and to hold besides, one separate session in each district.

The minutes for 1784 and 1785, have not been procured.*

In November 1786, they met at Ground Squirrel meeting house, in Hanover county. Wm. Webber was chosen Moderator, and Reuben Ford, Clerk.†

The only business of general application transacted at this session, was the solution of the following query :

“ *How is ordination legally performed ?* ”

Answer.—“ *A presbytery of ministers are fully empowered, to ordain any faithful man properly recommended, whom they shall judge able to teach others ; and that ministers shall be subject to ministers, with regard to their call to the ministry, and the doctrine they preach. The church where the minister is a member, shall take cognizance of his moral character.* ”

* It is much to be regretted, that no record book was kept, as to the proceedings of the association about this time.

† Mr. Webber discharged the duty of moderator from this time until the session before his death. Mr. Reuben Ford is still clerk to the association.

This decision, though founded in reason and scripture, gave umbrage to some, who indulged strong jealousies respecting ministerial influence, and who held, that a call from a church was sufficient ordination. In consequence of this opposition, the subject was again introduced into the Dover Association, in the year 1792 : to our history of which, the reader is referred.

October 12th, 1787.—They met again at the Factory in Westmoreland county. Letters from 21 churches were received. Many local matters were taken up and decided. The preaching at this association, was warm and heart-searching. Some who were there, speak of it as a very precious season. Such is always the case, when God is about to revive his work.

October 3d, 1788.—The next and last session of the united districts, was at Burruss's meeting house, in Caroline county. 21 churches corresponded. After attending to a great deal of local business, they agreed to finally divide.* To the Lower District they agreed to attach the name Dover ; and Orange to the Upper.

May 16, 1789.—The Dover association met at Upper King and Queen meeting house. Letters were received from 21 churches. This being the time of the great revival, almost throughout the district, the letters teemed with the most glorious intelligence. This association was attended by preachers from various quarters of the state. Their labours by day and by night, were abundantly blessed. The souls of saints were comforted, and many very many sinners, were won over to Christ. It was a blessed time. At this association, as well as at several before and after this, the perplexing question with regard to the marriage of slaves, was introduced. The association resolved, that the state of the slaves of Virginia, was of so sin-

* The Lower District held several meetings separate from the other ; but they were thinly attended, and but little was done.

gular and delicate a nature, that no general rule could apply. They, therefore, advised the churches to adapt their proceedings, to the nature of each case, in the most prudent way.

October 16th, 1789.—The association met at Kilmarnock meeting house, in Lancaster county. 17 churches corresponded by letters, in which, very refreshing news is communicated. The revival was still progressing. Many hundreds had been baptized in the course of the year.

No business of importance was entered upon.

May 1st, 1790.—They met at Boar Swamp meeting house, Henrico county. Letters from 19 churches were received. The revival, it appeared from the letters, had subsided in a considerable degree. The preaching and the religious exercises at this association, was exceedingly pleasant to the pious, who were present.

A matter which had produced considerable confusion in some parts of the association, was now considered, viz: *Whether baptism was valid, when administered by an unordained person.* To which the association replied: *That, in cases where the ordinance had been administered, in a solemn and religious manner, that it might be considered as valid, and that persons so baptized, might be admitted as members of a church, upon hearing and approving their experience.*

October 9th, 1790.—They met at Diamond meeting house in Essex county. Letters from 29 churches were received, which speak of pleasant times.

The only business of a permanent nature, transacted at this association, was the decision of the following query:

Is a minister in duty bound to serve a church who do not support him?

Answered in the negative.

The correctness of this decision has since been much questioned.

Is the union of pastor and church, merely a contract between them as parties? If it is, then the decision is correct: but, if the assuming the pastoral care of a church, partakes of the nature of a vow to God, as well as a contract with the church, then the minister is bound to discharge the duties of a pastor, until he has satisfactory evidence, that God has exempted him from such duties; and designs him for some other place. The non-compensation of ministerial services, is not sufficient proof, that God does not will his further labours in such a place: Seeing, many ministers have been highly favoured of God, in places, where they have received little or no compensation from their hearers. The best conclusion therefore, is, that although the church is censurable for withholding from the pastor his just right, yet the pastor is bound to God; and, has his promise, that *he that trusts in him, shall want no good thing.*

The circular letter on justification, by Mr. Toler, was much approved, and was ordered to be printed with the minutes. This is the first instance of the minutes of this association being printed.

October 8th, 1791.—Pursuant to appointment, the association met at Kingston meeting house, Mathews county *. Lotters from 27 churches were received. They give no pleasing accounts of revivals, but hold forth a state of peace and tranquility, among the church,

October 13th, 1792.—The association met at Brunnington meeting house, King and Queen county. Letters from 25 churches were received. By them it appeared, that in Dover district, the harvest was past, and the Summer ended. Coldness and languor, were generally complained of. The great revival had now subsided, and the axe of discipline was laid at the root of the tree. Many barren and fruitless trees, were already cut down. In many of the churches, the number excluded, surpassed the number received. The association, however, was full. Great crowds attend-

* Now called Mathews meeting house.

ed the preaching ; and, it was doubtless a happy season to God's children.

Among other business of less note, the subject of the ordination of elders or church-officers, was taken up at this association. A question had been agitated for some years, *whether ordination ought to be by the imposition of the hands of a presbytery, or plurality of elders* (the mode commonly practised in Virginia), or, *whether a solemn call from a church was not sufficient.*

On the part of the advocates of ordination, without the imposition of hands, it was argued, *that churches were acknowledged to be independent, but if they could not obtain the full services of a minister, unless he had been previously examined and ordained by a presbytery, their independence was so far destroyed ; that churches were better judges, what gifts would suit them, than presbyteries could be ; that the imposition of hands mentioned in the scripture, was with a view to miraculous, and not common gifts ; and lastly, that it had the appearance, of being governed too much, by forms.*

To these arguments, it was answered, *that the new testament did surely sanction the practice of laying on of hands, in some cases, where no miraculous consequences did ensue : that, although the imposition of hands was a form, yet it was a significant form, used in all ages of the Christian church, for the purpose of consecrating, or setting aside persons for holy offices : that baptism and the Lord's supper were also external forms, but being significant, and sanctioned by the word of inspiration, they were owned and blessed to the church : that it was true that churches were, and ought to be independent, to a proper extent ; but this independence did not authorise them to ordain officers, contrary to revelation, unless they were independent of God also : that no minister or deacon, was imposed upon them but by their own consent : that although a church might judge better than a presbytery what*

suited her, it was not reasonable that those who had not exercised a public gift, should be so competent to judge of public gifts; as those who had.

After the subject had been investigated for years, at different times, and in different ways, it was finally decided in this association, in favour of the imposition of hands. After this, very little was ever said about it.

The purchase of lottery tickets was considered by this association as a species of gaming, and not sufferable in members of churches.

October 12th, 1793.—They met at Glebe Landing meeting house in Middlesex. Most of the letters complained of cold times. The only business of a general nature, which occupied their attention, was the recommending, that rules for family discipline and the instruction of youth, should be formed. This, however, has never as yet, gone fully into operation. It was at this session, that a church, in the city of Williamsburg, composed wholly of black people, or rather people of colour, was admitted into the association. They have continued ever since, to send their delegates. It was in this year, that the pestilential fever prevailed, to such a distressing extent, in the city of Philadelphia. The association, believing it to be a judgment of God, appointed a day of fasting and prayer, to deprecate his wrath.

At this association, the preaching was uncommonly animating; the business was conducted with much harmony, and all parties pleased with the interview, separated from each other, in love and peace. The circular letter was written by Mr. Lunsford, on the covenant of grace.

October 11th, 1794 — They again met at Nominie meeting house, Westmoreland county, according to appointment. Nothing of a singular or general nature, was transacted at this time. The letter said nothing of a revival, but of the contrary. The preaching, debates, conversation, &c. were all apparently

calculated, to do permanent good, as well as to administer immediate gratification. It was a feast to the Lord's family. The circular letter was written on the Nature of Associations, from which, a quotation has been already made in page 42.

October 10th, 1795 — The next session was at Four Mile Creek meeting house, Henrico county. No business was transacted worthy of notice. From first to last of the meeting, every thing went on agreeably. The circular letter was written by Elder Reuben Ford, on the duty of ministers, deacons and churches. The writing the circular letter on this subject, arose from this circumstance: A very worthy and useful minister, had undertaken to discharge some public office, by which, he was much hindered from his ministerial duties. It was supposed, that the reasonable demands of his family, made it necessary, having been neglected by the church. The letter was composed with a view to stimulate churches, ministers and deacons, to a regular performance of their duties to each other. The next association was appointed at the Lower College meeting house in King William county.

October 8th, 1796.—Met agreeable to appointment. Nothing important was attended to. There was no angry disputation, no whisperings, no parties; but, after friendly debates, there were most commonly unanymous decisions. The circular letter was composed upon the religious education of children, which subject was also taken up, upon the following query:

How ought the religious education of children, to be conducted? Which received the following

Answer.---By the use of catechisms; and we recommend for the present, such as may be judged useful.

A committee was also appointed to compose a suitable one, for the use of the members of the association. The next association was appointed at Bestland meeting house, in Essex county.

October 14th, 1796.—Met agreeable to appointment. Elder John Leland, from New England, attended. His preaching and conversation at this association, was highly entertaining, as well as instructing, especially to young and inexperienced ministers. At this session, nothing but business of a local nature, called their attention. The circular letter for this association, was written by Elder Reuben Ford, without any appointed subject. The association met in peace, continued in love, and parted with sorrow and hope.

October 13th, 1798.—The next association met at Mathews meeting house, Mathews county, according to appointment. The letters did not detail any thing very interesting. The business was altogether local, except as to the following

Query. *What is the opinion of the association, concerning the washing the saints' feet?*

Answer. *We do not consider the washing of feet, an ordinance of the gospel, but an act of entertainment, and being a servile act, appears to have been enjoined by Christ, to be observed by his disciples, as a token of humility, and may include any other act, usually performed by servants.*

The circular letter was written upon the subject of Fasts. As usual, it was a time of love to God's people. The next association was appointed at Hickory Neck meeting house, James City county.

October 12th, 1799.—They met according to appointment. The letters of correspondence, seemed now to afford more pleasing accounts. The day-star began to dawn. Great revivals were in embryo. The place of this meeting was inconvenient to a majority of the churches. In consequence of which, there was not so full a representation of the churches, as at some other associations. It was also thought, that the congregations were not so large, as they usually are on such occasions. The business of the association, which was entirely local, was however, conducted

harmoniously. The circular letter was written, on the connexion between pastors and churches. The next association, was appointed at Nuckol's meeting house, Goochland county.

October 11th, 1800.---They met according to appointment. Good news and glad tidings, now saluted the ears and hearts of the pious. Glorious revivals were spoken of in most of the letters. So pleasing was the information, that the association resolved to decline printing, for the present, the circular letter written by the directions of the last association, and now, to draw up an account of the revival, which was accordingly done. Nothing singular or general, was transacted at this association. It was a time of life, love and peace. The next association appointed at Matapony meeting house, King and Queen county,

October 10th, 1801.---They met according to appointment. From the letters it was learned, that the revivals spoken of last year, were still gloriously going on, and some new ones begun. At this association, the preaching and other religious employments, seemed to have singular effects. The souls of christians were enlivened, and although for many years, the association, at all her meetings, had experienced uninterrupted harmony and peace, it must be admitted that the religious enjoyment at this, rather surpassed that of any other.—A good deal of local, but no general business, occupied the attention of the association. The circular letter was written, upon the use and abuse of spirituous liquors. The reason for taking up this subject, is obvious to any who know the state of civil society. The next association was appointed at Nomini meeting house, Westmoreland county.

October 9th, 1802.---They met according to appointment. By the letters it appeared, that the revivals, in some places, were rather on the decline; in others, new ones commencing. Upon the whole, the cause of godliness was progressing. At this as-

sociation, an attempt was made to establish an uniformity among the churches, in holding their church meetings. Some churches admitted to their church meetings, even for discipline and government, all the members of the church, male and female bond-free, young and old. Others admitted all male members, whether slaves or free. By experience, this plan was found vastly inconvenient. The degraded state of the minds of slaves, rendered them totally incompetent to the task of judging correctly respecting the business of the church, and in many churches, there was a majority of slaves : in consequence of which, great confusion often arose. The association at Matapony directed, that the subject should be treated on in a circular letter. The letter argued and advised, that although all members were entitled to the privileges, yet, that none but free male members, should exercise any authority in the church. The association, after some debate, sanctioned the plan by a large majority. Nominimeeting house stands in the Northern neck, quite inconvenient for a majority of the churches. The association was of course not so full as usual, but as usual it was an agreeable time. The next association was appointed at King and Queen meeting house, King and Queen county.

October 8th, 1803.—Met according to appointment. By the letters we learn, that in some churches, times were very pleasing; but, in others, very much the reverse. A subject, long a matter of debate, among the Baptists of Virginia, was debated and settled at this association, viz. *The propriety of preaching funeral sermons*. A query had been introduced into the association, the year before, and it was made the subject of the circular letter. The sentiments of the letter were, that preaching funeral sermons, and funeral ceremonies, generally, were matters of perfect indifference, and could have neither good nor evil in them. But, that things of indifference, could be turned by bad men, to bad purposes, and it was equal,

ly obvious, that good men, when it was in their power, could and ought to direct them to good purposes. That the gospel ought to be preached on all occasions, when there was a hope of its doing good. That preaching over the dead, was a kind of invitation to go to the house of mourning, where the living might lay it to heart : These, with some other arguments of less weight, seemed to clear up most of the doubts. The letter was received with an almost unanimous vote. In this association, an animated debate took place, on the propriety of passing church censures, upon members who will not contribute a reasonable proportion to the expences of the church. The decision was, that no censure ought to pass on that account. The subject was, however, resumed the ensuing year, and the decision was given in the following words :

“ We never doubted but that according to the gospel, it was the duty of every member of the church to contribute to the expence of the church, according as the Lord had prospered him ; but we supposed it might be productive of disagreeable consequences, if the church undertook to judge of the abilities of members, and to censure or approve them.”

* At this association, times were agreeable, so far as respected religious employments ; but the happiness of many, was somewhat lessened, by a practice which had long prevailed, more or less, at associations and great meetings, but which here arose to a very distressing height, viz. *The selling of spirituous liquors, by wicked and worthless persons* ; in consequence of which, many who were so unprincipled and wicked, as not to restrain themselves, became intoxicated, and of course disorderly. Warned by these events, measures have been taken by the association, since the above period, to prevent such abuses, and they have been as successful as could be expected, in such a case. The next association was appointed at Four Mile Creek meeting house, Henrico county.

October 13th, 1804.—They met according to appointment. From the letters, it appears that no revival existed in any church; but from some, there were considerable expectations. Several matters of a general and important nature, occupied the attention of the association at this meeting, viz. “*The confession of faith;*” “*The History of the Baptists in Virginia;*” “*The appointment of Union Meetings;*” and “*A Remonstrance against a law of Virginia, respecting night meetings.*” All of which, will be noticed in other places of this work. About this time, the Baptists in this association, received a grievous wound in the wretched apostacy of one Thomas Bridges, who had been a preacher of some celebrity, but was now convicted and sent to the penitentiary, for horse stealing. The friends of Zion mourned, not because the foundation of God was shaken, or could be shaken, but because the cause of truth was too plausibly, though fallaciously reproached. To obviate the evil as much as possible, the circular letter was written upon the subject of Religious Apostacy. It was thought that good effects arose from it. The next association was appointed at Bruington meeting house, King and Queen county.

October 12th, 1805.—They met according to appointment. By the letters of correspondence, the association was informed of great and good news, from several parts. In most of the churches, in the lower end of the district between Rappahannock and James River, there were previous revivals. In some, several hundreds had been baptized. The preaching, and other religious exercises at the association, were correspondent with this heavenly news. It was a time of feasting upon fat things. No business whatever, of a singular and general nature, was transacted; except that some attention was paid to the history, noticed in the last. Elder Toler, according to appointment, produced a most excellent circular letter on the subject of Brotherly Love. The next as-

sociation was appointed at Grafton meeting house, York county.

October 11th, 1806.---They met according to appointment. Information was received by the letters, that a great and glorious work of God was going on in the Northern Neck. Most of the churches in that quarter participated, more or less; but Nomini, under the care of Mr. Toler, was superlatively favoured. The business which occupied the attention of the association, was altogether local. The association was not so full as usual, being in an eccentric place; but those that did go, said it was good for them that they were there. The circular letter was written on the place and object of good works. The next association was appointed at Ware's meetinghouse, King and Queen county, which, on account of the pressure of business, was appointed to hold four days.

October 11th, 1807.---They met according to appointment. No new revivals are spoken of in any of the letters. In some places, where revivals had been, a few years past, they speak of distressing times: That the love of many, was waxing cold. There must be a fanning time; as well as a harvest time. The association, according to last years appointment, continued their meeting four days. Some business of a general, and much of a local nature, occupied their attention.

The year 1806, was a year of great droughth, and crops of corn were uncommonly scanty; insomuch, that many poor people suffered for the necessaries of life. In the time of the droughth, most of the Baptist churches, appointed and observed fast days. The crops of the year 1807, were uncommonly plentiful. The association taking this matter into consideration, determined to appoint a thanksgiving day.* The circular letter, appointed to be written upon the Nature of Sanctification, by Elder Toler, was read and ap-

* The day was uniformly observed throughout the district, to the great satisfaction of almost all sorts of people.

proved by a majority; but supposing that the investigation of a subject, sufficiently settled on the main points, and too intricate on subordinate ones, to expect unanimity, would produce no good effect, it was determined not to print it. A short address on the propriety of appointing public days for special religious purposes, was printed in the place thereof. For the space of eighteen years, the association fund had been gradually increasing; so that, on the settlement, this year, it was found that there were in the hands of the treasurer, 68*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* which, with the present contributions, after paying all expences, amounted to 78*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* This being a respectable sum, and upon enquiry finding, that in case of the death of the present treasurer, the association not being incorporated, they might find some difficulty in regaining the money: It was resolved, that three trustees should be appointed, to take the obligations of the treasurer, payable to them, as trustees; thus, having a definite number, an action at law might be maintained. It was also agreed to pay one hundred and fifty dollars, for the encouragement of the History of the Virginia Baptists. The next association was appointed at Salem meeting house, Caroline county.

October 8th, 1808.---They met according to appointment. The letters, generally, spoke of languor and luke-warmness, among the churches. There was no business, proper to be noticed in this history, transacted at this session. The public ministrations were pleasing, and the time of continuing together, was spent in a happy and useful manner. The circular letter was written, upon the duty of Christians to obey the civil laws.

Oct. 14, 1809.—The association assembled at Mathews meeting house, in Mathews county. The uniform language of the letters was, complaint of the lifeless state of religion in all the churches, yet it appeared that peace and harmony and brotherly love, with earnest longings for a revival, were generally

felt. At this association, it was proposed to recommend to parents, &c. the use of a catechism that had been lately published, for the religious instruction of children. This catechism, though too long deferred, had really been published, in conformity to the resolution of the association, in their session of 1796. It however, met with great opposition, upon the principle, that nothing of the kind was necessary; that the Bible was sufficient; that things of that kind, had a dangerous tendency towards lessening the dignity of the scriptures; that the most corrupt and absurd sentiments, had been inculcated through catechisms.

The advocates for the recommendation replied, to these objections: that, corrupt men could communicate corrupt sentiments, through the most sacred channels: that, the pulpit and the press, conversation and even public prayer, had been occasionally, the vehicles of unsound doctrines: that, it could be no indignity to the scriptures, to inculcate upon the minds of children, principles and duties, completely sanctioned by the scriptures: that, such forms of instruction, greatly assisted parents in the discharge of their duty; seeing there could be few parents, capable of explaining the Bible suitably, for the instruction of children: that, the manners and morals of the children of Baptists, lately grown up, plainly evinced, that religious education had been too much neglected: that, the opponents to the measure, had probably fallen into the same mistake, that the cotemporary disciples of Christ had done, who forbade little children to be brought to their master, for which, they received his rebuke. After a lengthy and warm debate, the majority decided in favour of the recommendation. The same subject was taken up, a few weeks after, by the General Meeting of Correspondence, and by an unanimous vote, the catechism was recommended. It is devoutly to be wished, that this may be the beginning of a reformation, among the

Baptists of Virginia, as to this duty: For, considering their exemplary piety in other respects, they have certainly been too remiss, in training up their children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.--- The circular letter was written upon Christian Order. The next association was appointed to be holden in the city of Richmond.



CHAPTER X.

Historical Sketches of the Churches, of the first Union Meeting District, in Dover Association.

HAVING detailed the proceedings of the Dover association, at her different sessions, we shall now proceed to the history of the churches. We have mentioned in our account of the session of 1804, that the association established Union Meetings. This was done by laying off the district into three sections.--- These were called Union Meeting Districts, and were numbered first, second and third. The first included all the churches between York and James River. The second, all between York and Rappahannock; and the third, all between Rappahannock and Potomack. In these districts, it is expected that the preachers shall meet two or three times every year, agreeable to the appointment of the association, and keep up preaching for two or three days. The meetings have accordingly been observed, tolerably regular ever since: and from them; it has been thought, that many advantages have resulted. In treating of the churches, we shall be governed by this arrangement, and shall commence with those of the first district.

DOVER.

This church has already been mentioned in the general account of the rise of the Baptists in these parts.

Since that time, it has been a flourishing church, having had some very refreshing revivals. That which took place in 1799 and 1800, was a great one indeed.

From soon after the constitution, until his death, Elder Wm. Webber was their pastor. He died 1808. (*See his Biography.*) They have not procured the services of any minister as yet, in the character of a pastor. Mr. Mathew Woodson, was a member and a deacon of this church, and one of the best of men.

In this church, there have been several preachers raised up, viz. Joseph Anthony, concerning whom, see Biography :

Augustin Eastin, who moved to Kentucky, and who, though a man of some talents, was never any credit to the cause of truth. He appears to have been always carried away with the opinions of others, whom he wished to imitate. Sometimes he was a professed and positive Calvinist. Then shifting about, he becomes as warm an Arminian. Then, to the right about again, he is re-convinced, that Calvinism is the only true way. Having moved to Kentucky, he finds some professors of high standing in civil life, who lean to the Arian scheme. Mr. Eastin soon becomes their champion, and even writes a pamphlet, in defence of Arianism. This last change, has made much noise among the Baptists in Kentucky. But, thanks to the divine protection, no Arian or Socinian Baptists are known in Virginia. Mr. Eastin's moral character has not been impeached. On this head, both he and his coadjutors, are men of high respectability.

Mr. Farro, an ordained preacher, still resides in this church. He is a respectable man.

GOOCHLAND.

This is a mother church, as may be seen elsewhere. From about the year of their constitution, to the present time, they have been blessed with the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Ford. Nothing singular has happened since the period, to which her history was

brought down (*See page 12, of the general rise of the Baptists*). They were revived in the year 1799, which, says Mr. Ford, in his manuscript, "*was as pleasant as rain to the thirsty ground, or bread to the hungry soul.*" About one hundred and twenty were added to the church. It has sometimes happened, among the churches, that partial revivals have been granted, in which there would be only those of a particular description brought in. A remarkable stir of this kind, took place among the black people in this church, in the year 1806. More than one hundred of them were baptized.

The following churches have been constituted off from this church, viz. Dover, in 1773; Chickahominy, in 1776; Licking-Hole, in 1776; Hungry, in 1791; and Hopeful, in 1807. Several preachers have also been raised and have resided in this church.

Mr. Ford is now about 68 years of age, and is a venerable man indeed. Few men ever deceived less by their physiognomy than Elder Ford. No man ever sees him, who does not view him with reverence, at his first appearance, and no man ever was disappointed in him. Grave, without the least moroseness; cheerful, without a symptom of levity; modest, gentle and affectionate in his manners, yet firm in his purposes; he has every thing out of the pulpit, which might serve as a model, of a gospel minister; his life is truly spotless; his talents are of the useful kind; in his doctrine, he is somewhat tinctured with Arminianism.

HOPEFUL.

This is quite a new church. The members live partly in Hanover, and partly in Louisa. They are a pious, orderly and affectionate people. The church was raised almost wholly through the ministry of the venerable Mr. Ford, to whom they are uncommonly united. They were formerly a branch of the Goochland church.

HISTORY OF THE CHICKAHOMINY.

This church is composed of members living partly in Hanover and partly in Henrico. Their meeting house is in Hanover, a very small distance from the county line. Soon after her constitution, she chose Mr. John Clay as their pastor. Under his care, they did not prosper. He died in about four years. The church having been raised chiefly through the labours of Elders Ford and Webber, they again resorted to them for aid. They attended them jointly once a month, for several years. In 1785, they had a pleasant refreshing, about sixty were added; and among them two young preachers, viz. John Penny, who afterwards moved to Kentucky, and Benjamin Bowles, their present pastor.*

In 1800, they were again favoured with the smiles of Heaven, when about eighty were baptized.

Elder Bowles is a solid experimental preacher.--- When he feels religion, he is more transported than is usual, and on such occasions, will not, cannot, cease to proclaim the divine goodness to all around him. Such exhortations have done much good.

HUNGRY.

This church was constituted off from Chickahominy, and had, at first, Mr. Peter Cottrel for their pastor; he falling into disorder, and being expelled, the church was left destitute; they then procured the stated attendance of Elders Courtney and Webber, until about 1798, when Elder Bernard Reynolds settled among them, and was chosen pastor; in which office he has continued until this time.

Mr. Reynolds was once a preacher, in the Methodist connexion; but being fully convinced of the verity of Baptist principles, he united with them, and has since remained unwavering; his preaching is now sound and evangelical; he is respected in civil, as well as in religious matters, having been appointed a

* Mr. Bowles has since resigned.

magistrate for the county. Whether the holding this, or any such office, is entirely compatible with that ministry, which should not be entangled with the affairs of this life, is a matter to be settled by each man's conscience. It is probably better left for laymen.

CITY OF RICHMOND.

Within the limits of the Dover association is Richmond, the metropolis of Virginia; here, although the Baptists are not the most flourishing sect, they stand upon respectable ground; they have built, by public subscription, a large brick meeting house, and probably, move on, both as it respects discipline and the conducting of public worship, with as much regularity as any people in the union. Their pastor, Elder Courtney, took the care in the year 1788, and under his labours they have enjoyed peace and prosperity; he is now (1809) about 66 years of age.

This church arose from the labours of Joshua Morris, their first pastor; he living in the Boar Swamp church, set up a meeting, at one Franklin's, near the city of Richmond, where baptizing a few, and soon after moving to Richmond to live, a church was constituted under his care. After residing in Richmond some years, he moved to Kentucky.

Within this church there are, besides Elder Courtney, several ordained and licensed preachers, viz. George Williamson, who is first master armourer; Herman Sneade, a teacher; William Brame, who travels and preaches a great deal; and others, not so permanently fixed.

BOAR SWAMP.

This church is about fifteen miles below Richmond, and about ten North East of Four Mile Creek. This was once a prosperous and flourishing church, but having had no pastor for many years, they have rather declined.

FOUR MILE.

The meeting house to this church is about nine or ten

miles below Richmond. They have Elder John Lindsey, for their minister; he is old and infirm, but a pious and useful minister. They have some very respectable private members.

CHARLES CITY.

This church is in the county of the same name, and was raised by the labours of Elijah Baker and Joseph Anthony, who first began their service in this neighborhood, about the year 1774. They at first sustained much opposition, but no personal violence. During the year '75, several were baptized. Anno '76, James Bradley, afterwards their pastor, was converted and baptized, and soon began to preach.--- Soon after the church was constituted, Mr. Bradley was chosen pastor, and continued to discharge the duties thereof, until he died on the 6th of September, 1803. Mr. Bradley, at first, preached by form, or in other words, read his sermons to the people, but soon laid aside his notes, and preached extempore. Although he was not a very successful, nor a very popular preacher, there were few men who stood in higher estimation, in point of piety and uniformity of conduct, than Mr. Bradley. He was universally esteemed an honest and faithful servant of God.--- Since his death, Mr. Wm Clopton, who had long been a leading member of the church, seeing the great need of a preacher, began to speak publicly, and finally was ordained to the ministry. The state of religion in this church, is rather adverse; yet order and peace are preserved among the members, while the wicked will do wickedly. When the set time to favour Zion shall arrive, she will doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing the sheaves of the spiritual harvest.

In this church there used to be and still are, a great number of blacks. For some cause, they were forbidden to preach; upon which, they set up a kind of independence, and went on not only to preach, but to baptize. It all, however, ended in confusion.

BLACK CREEK.

This church has gone through as many revolutions as any in the association. Her misfortunes arose, as is often the case, from the errors and misconduct of their preachers. Their first pastor was Wm. Barns, who being a remarkably weak, though a well meaning preacher, the church languished under his care; he moved away about the year 1785: In '88, Thomas Courtney moved from King-William into the bounds of Black Creek, and the church being in much confusion, was re-constituted under Mr. Courtney's care. About '91 they had a revival, when some very respectable members were added. Mr. Courtney moved in '95 to Richmond, and there died, with the small pox. After Mr. Courtney's death, the church fell into confusion again, and was constituted a third time. From the first origin of this church, R. Snead, a preacher of some talents, resided within her limits; this man was the cause of a great part of the confusion; he was really a double-minded man, who was unstable in all his ways; sometimes he would be a quaker; sometimes a pedit-baptist; and again return with double violence, to Baptist principles; he was alternately a Calvinist, an Arminian and an Universalist. When excommunicated for his principles (for his morals were correct), he would return after some time, and make such apparently sincere concessions, that it would seem uncharitable not to excuse him. He died in the church. John Turner, who has lately undertaken the care of the church, Herman Snead and John Goodman, preachers, were all sons of this church.

While Thomas Courtney resided among them, they enjoyed considerable prosperity. Mr. Courtney was brother to Elder Courtney, pastor of the Richmond church. Though not a very able, he was a lively and agreeable preacher; he was singular for his good humour and pleasant temper; he was a bad economist, and by that means was often embarrassed in his affairs.

This excepted, Mr. Courtney might be considered, a first rate religious character. He died triumphing in redeeming love. Mr. Clopton, who has for many years represented this district in Congress, is a member of this church.

JAMES CITY.

This church, in the county of the same name, was also planted by the labours of Elijah Baker, who began his labours within its limits, about the year 1772. Previous to this, Jeremiah Walker had preached among the people, and was much opposed by the parson of the parish and others; his preaching however was not effectual. Soon after, Mr. Baker visited this neighborhood, and several obtained hope in Christ, and were baptized. Mr. John Goodall, who had been much approved as clerk of the church, obtained a hope, but thought he would endeavour to do without baptism; but going to see some of his neighbors baptized, he could no longer rest, but sent the next day for the ministers and was baptized. Soon after his baptism, he began to preach, and was ordained to the care of the church, a few years after it was constituted; he continued to exercise the pastoral function, until 1806, when he moved to Kentucky. The church is not at present in a flourishing state. The Methodists are numerous in this neighborhood. Elder Joshua Morris, a preacher of considerable gifts, who afterwards resided in the city of Richmond, and then moved to Kentucky, was a native of this church; his father and uncle, also occasionally preached.

WILLIAMSBURG.

This church is composed almost, if not altogether, of people of colour. Moses, a black man, first preached among them, and was often taken up and whipped, for holding meetings. Afterwards Gowan, who called himself Gowan Pamphlet, moved from Middlesex, where he had been preaching for some time; he became popular among the blacks, and began to baptize, as well as to preach. It seems, the association

had advised that no person of colour should be allowed to preach, on the pain of excommunication; against this regulation, many of the blacks were rebellious, and continued still to hold meetings. Some were excluded, and among this number was Gowan, just mentioned. Continuing still to preach and many professing faith under his ministry, not being in connexion with any church himself, he formed a kind of church out of some who had been baptized, who, sitting with him, received such as offered themselves; Gowan baptized them, and was moreover appointed their pastor; some of them knowing how to write, a church-book was kept; they increased to a large number; so that in the year 1791, when the Dover association was holden in Mathews county, they petitioned for admittance into the association, stating their number to be about five hundred. The association received them, so far, as to appoint persons to visit them and set things in order. These, making a favourable report, they were received, and have associated ever since. A few years since, Gowan died.

GRAFTON.

This church was planted by the labour of the indefatigable E. Baker; his first labours in the bounds of this church, was about the year 1775; some were awakened: this encouraged him to continue to visit them; and in no great while, he baptized several. Joshua Morris, a young preacher from James City, watered the plants. John Wright was baptized about 1776, and soon began to exhort and preach. In '77 they were constituted, and Mr. Wright became their pastor. Mr. Wright was a blessed man of God.—He was faithful to occupy his talents. No man could find him out of his place; he lived and died a pious christian, and a faithful as well as useful minister of Christ; he was a poor man, and had a family to labour for, which prevented him from being as extensively useful, as he would probably have been, under more affluent circumstances; but his vineyard,

though small, was well kept ; his duty, was his delight ; in discipline he was tender, yet vigilant and impartial : Once, when much disorder had crept into the arm of the church, round about Hampton, through the misconduct of Chisman ; the old man went down, and began to winnow with so heavy a hand, that some person observed in company, he would leave but few of the doctor's disciples : yes, said a gentleman who knew him, he would turn out the last man to-morrow, before he would countenance disorder.—He died about 1795, much regretted by all sorts of people. Contrasted to this character, lived in the same church, doctor Thomas Chisman, a practitioner of physic, but who, professing grace was baptized about '81 or '82 : he soon commenced preaching, and soon also became popular ; with the judicious he never ranked above mediocrity, and indeed hardly ascended to that grade : but with many, he was considered almost inimitable. Some of the externals of the orator he possessed in a great degree ; his person and mien was dignified, his voice clear and sonorous ; his gesture though violent was expressive ; and his style by no means contemptible ; his manner warm and sometimes pathetic : but his mind, a perfect chaos ; darkness and confusion sat regents ; he had no invention, no wit ; a fallacious judgment, and but little information : but these defects were considerably remedied, by an invincible boldness : taking the most mysterious texts, he would push on, in the fulness of self-confidence, giving interpretations, which were never dreamed of by the inspired author. These discourses were much admired by many, and gained for the doctor a great name. All this however, might have been swallowed, even by those who knew his weight, if the doctor had possessed that part of the preacher, without which, all others are null, viz. *a pious life*. For seven or eight years, he was thought by most of his acquaintances, to be singularly zealous and pious : he emancipated

his slaves, and in other respects made great apparent sacrifices: but his day ended in darkness; yielding to temptations of the most diabolical sort, he became the greatest stumbling block, that, that county ever witnessed: the effects were melancholy beyond description: he was quickly excluded, but continued his vicious pursuits for a considerable time. At length he was found by the hand of God, and surely few men ever felt the rod more severely; to appearance, he was exceedingly penitent, and many pitied him, and regained some faith in his piety, but others thought differently; he had been baptized by Elder Leland, while he resided in Virginia, and was uncommonly attached to him. Just before he died, which happened in the year 1797, he was informed, that Mr. Leland had come into Virginia and had made appointments to come down to York, on hearing this he raised himself in bed and expressed great joy at the expectation of seeing him once more. But as if God had resolved that his expectations should perish, he died a few days before Mr. Leland got down. It is not for us to decide how God has disposed of him, but it is surely lawful to wish, and to pray, that none such may ever again be permitted to dishonour a gospel church, in so gross a manner.

Elder Mathew Wood, a pious and useful preacher, still resides in this church, but Elder Gayle who moved from Mathews, was, anno, 1796 chosen pastor. They had in the year 1805 under the united labours of Elders Gayle and Wood, one of the most heavenly revivals: not less than about 330 or 340 were baptized. After the revival they had a winnowing season. Many that seemed to be somewhat, proved to be nothing. Yet there is still a large and respectable church. Elder Robert Stacy, now pastor of Abingdon, was raised up and ordained in Grafton.

HAMPTON.

This church, through the downfall of Chisman, never prospered much until 1805, when they had a

revival, about 200 were baptized; after which they chose Elder Richard Hurst to be their pastor, who had been raised up in the church, and under whose labors chiefly, the revival had been conducted. He is a lively and warm preacher. Before the revival, Elder Gayle had attended them statedly,



CHAPTER XI.

Historical Sketches of the Churches in the second Union Meeting District, in Dover Association.

REEDS.

This church lies in the lower end of Caroline, having some members in the upper end of King William. The first labourers within the limits of this church were Harriſs and Read. John Young, ſoon after this, became a convert and a preacher, and was ordained paſtor to the church, at her firſt conſtitution. The church however, rather languished until 1788, when ſixty or ſeventy were added. About '98, Mr. Young moved to Albemarle, where he has been uſeful, and is ſtill living. After Mr. Young's removal, the church choſe for their paſtor, Elder John Self, who had long been an aſſiſtant elder in this church. Nothing remarkable has occurred ſince Mr. Self took the care. This church has generally had more than one ordained preacher. Elder Hipkins Pitman, was for many years a reſident member. At preſent Elder Richard Broadus is a member, and labours jointly with Elder Self. Samuel Brame, a young preacher of the moſt conſpicuous talents, was raised in this church; he afterwards moved to Halifax and died: his mother, Mrs. Brame, is now living, and a member of this church, and was in her early days, a ſtated hearer and communicant of the famous Mr. Samuel Davis. She frequently heard Mr. Whitefield, in his travels through Ameri-

ca, and sometimes had him at her house. 'Tis pleasant to hear, this mother in Israel, tell the interesting anecdotes which she treasured up, respecting these great men of God. Mrs. Brame, is truly one of the daughters of Sarah.

Considering the date, at which the Baptists began to preach within the limits of this church, it might reasonably be expected that persecution, more or less, attended them. Nor will this expectation be disappointed. Mr. Young was committed to jail for preaching, and there kept for four months, until he appealed to the general court, and by a writ of habeas corpus was carried to Williamsburg. Elder H. Pitman was once taken up and threatened to be whipped, but was discharged without any farther injury.

TUCKAHOE.

The first Baptist preacher, that ever ministered within the bounds of this church, was John Corbley.—After Mr. Corbley had preached, the clergyman of the parish, who had come to hear him, attacked him, by way of argument. After the argument had been continued for some time; and, as might be expected, they came to no conclusion; the parson appointed the next Sunday, to preach against the Baptists. His text was, "*Will ye also go away.*" His discourse made not much impression, and indeed from his subsequent conduct, there were grounds to suspect that he was shaken in his own mind. For, afterwards when Waller and Craig were put into prison at Fredericksburg, this gentleman went to the prison, and entered into a friendly conversation upon the subject of religion; and before he left them, offered to be their security, if they chose to give bond. It does not appear, that any thing effectual was done, by the preaching of Mr. Corbley. In the year 1771, Lewis Craig came and preached in the bounds of this church. God owned and blessed his labours. Many were awakened and some converted. After him came John Waller, and preached with considerable success. Mr.

Craig continued to visit this place, and to cultivate the seed sown. Believers were added from time to time. Satan took the alarm, and stirred up opposition to Mr. Craig. A warrant was issued, and Mr. Craig was carried before a magistrate, to whom he gave bond not to preach in the county, within a certain number of days; but feeling himself hampered by this measure, he thought it best to incur the penalty; and accordingly preached some little time after, at one Reuben Catlet's plantation, and was taken up by virtue of a warrant and committed to prison, where he staid three months. When Mr. Craig went to jail he found — Herndon and B. Choning there, who being nothing more than exhorters, were soon after turned out. In the year 1775, James Ware and James Pitman were imprisoned sixteen days, for having preaching in their houses. They offered to give bond for good behaviour, generally, but not for permitting preaching in their houses in particular. This, at first, was refused them, but afterwards was acceded to, and they were discharged. Of these, James Pitman is still living, and a member of Tuckahoe church.— The last violence offered to any, within the bounds of this church, happened in the year '75, when Young Pitts, a preacher, and a man by the name of Picket, were taken up and carried by force some distance, as if with a view to bring them before a magistrate, but after some abuse, &c. they set them at liberty. Tuckahoe church, though small at first, became a flourishing church, under the care of Elder John Shackelford, who about two years after its constitution, moved from Spottsylvania, and took the pastoral care.— It was not until '88, that they had a revival. It was a memorable time indeed, not in this church only, but almost throughout the state of Virginia. In the course of this divine season, Mr. Shackelford baptized about three hundred.

Mr. Shackelford's narrow circumstances, with some other causes, induced him to move to Kentucky in the

year '92. He was an excellent gospel preacher, and an affectionate man. Since his removal to Kentucky, he has been very useful in the ministry. Some time after Mr. Shackelford left the church, they were fortunate enough to procure the services of Elder John Sorrel, under whose pastorate they have been happy and peaceable.

SALEM.

This church was taken off from Upper King and Queen. Until the year '87, there were scarcely any Baptists within the precincts of this church. In this and the succeeding year, was the great revival in the neighbouring churches, viz. Upper King and Queen and Tuckahoe. They met here as upon half way ground. The meetings were exceedingly powerful, and great numbers were baptized; most of them were united to the Upper King and Queen church, and fell under the care of Elder Noel; they remained, as an arm of that church until 1802, when they were constituted. They have had uniform peace and love among themselves. Elders Andrew and Richard Broadus were raised here.

UPPER COLLEGE.

This church is so called from many of their members living on and about the lands appropriated for the use of the college of William and Mary. The gospel was first brought into these parts, by Elder John Young and others. Their first pastor was Elder John Courtney; under his care the church prospered. When he moved to Richmond, they made choice of Elder Wm. Breeding: he was a pious and zealous preacher, and under his care they had in the year '88 and '89 a great revival; great numbers were baptized; but Mr. B. exerting himself beyond his strength, broke a blood-vessel, and died not long after, with the puking of blood. Elders Courtney, Toler, Breeding, Abraham, Whitlock and Brame, are sons of this church.

LOWER COLLEGE.

This church was for a long time an arm of Upper

College ; about the time of their constitution, they were attended by Elders Thomas Courtney and Robert B. Semple jointly ; after Mr. Courtney removed to Richmond, R. B. Semple attended them until the year '96, when they made choice of their present pastor Elder John Mill. In 1800, they were favoured with divine showers, and many were added. Elder Mill has been for several years in bad health, too much so to preach often. Of late he has much recovered. He was, previous to his baptism, in the Methodist connexion ; he is now a sound, steady, pious Baptist preacher ; his labours in the church, previous to his ill health, were greatly blessed : and it is hoped that God has raised him up again for a good purpose.— Wm. Hargrove is an ordained preacher in this church, and is useful in supplying other churches as well as his own, in the inability of their pastor.

UPPER KING & QUEEN.

This church, in the county of the same name, was first constituted under the care of Young Pitts, but he, becoming disorderly, was silenced : the church languished, and by the advice of experienced ministers dissolved their constitution, intending to join the Upper College, but being required by that church to relinquish their monthly meeting, and not wishing to do so, they again, the next month, resumed their constitution, and chose Elder Theodorick Noel, for their pastor ; this happened in the year 1780. Under the ministry of Elder Noel the church flourished, and gradually increased until the year 1788. On this year God descended in his mighty power. A greater work of grace has probably, never been known in Virginia, within the limits of one church. It continued, with but little abatement, during the year '89. It was usual to baptize every monthly meeting, and for many months, there were seldom, if ever less than twenty baptized, but more frequently, forty, fifty and sixty : many respectable private persons, and three or four preachers, were among these. Since this blessed

and memorable season, there have been but few additions. In 1802, Salem was taken off from this church.

BRUINGTON.

This is a large and prosperous church indeed. Unless the compiler feels a blinding partiality for these people, they have from their beginning, and do still experience a larger portion of religious harmony and happiness than ordinarily falls to the lot of churches. But lest this fine gold, should at some future day, become dim, we will curtail our remarks.

EXOL.

This is a church of long standing, for though not the first, yet she was among the first in those parts. Mr. Ivison Lewis is still their pastor, and has been ever since their first constitution. This church though blessed with a faithful and amiable pastor, has sustained great injury in past days, through disorderly preachers. Some of them becoming popular, drew many astray through their bad examples. The church for several years has enjoyed peace and harmony, and some degree of prosperity. Elder John Clarke is an ordained and useful minister in this church.

Exol was an orderly and thriving church until '88, when they had a considerable revival, in which about two hundred and fifty were baptized. It was after this revival, that the bars of discipline were measurably broken down. Few churches have raised more preachers than this; some good and valuable, others, the reverse. Mr. Lewis, their pastor, is in the highest estimation as a good man, and a zealous, active, heart-searching preacher. He aims chiefly at persuading sinners to repent, and many through him, have been persuaded.

LOWER KING & QUEEN.

This is a mother church, spoken of in our General History. The church did not advance in any considerable degree, under the care of Elder Ware, yet there were some very respectable and valuable characters added: after his death, which happened about

the year 1804, Mr. Wm. Todd was called to the pastoral care; few churches are more united to a pastor, than this church is to Mr. Todd; in the years 1805—6, they were visited by sovereign mercy. Her cords were lengthened, and her stakes were strengthened. In 1807 the lower arm of this church was constituted off, and called Pocorone. They have two meeting houses, some distance from each other, in both of which, church business is transacted.

POCORONE.

This church was taken from the last named church, and is orderly and happy, feeding upon the bread of life, sent them from God, by Elder James Healey.

UPPER ESSEX.

This is a mother church. Lewis Craig and others, as early as '68 or '69, preached in these parts. Their labours were not in vain; a few were baptized from time to time, until in the year '72, a church was organized, and lay elders ordained, not having any pastor; Mr. Craig continued to visit them, and was much beloved; when he could not attend as often as they wished, they invited Elder Joseph Bledsoe to take the care of them; he, however, living in Spottsylvania, could not or did not, perform the duties of pastor: this ended rather in confusion. In August '73, elder Noel was baptized, and soon began to blow the gospel trumpet. Being ordained, he discharged the duties of pastor, without being regularly inaugurated: few men have been more successful in the ministry than Mr. Noel: it is probable, that he has baptized as many persons as any other preacher now living in Virginia; among them have been a number of preachers, some of whom rank high in the ministry, as men of talents and usefulness: he is now and has been for many years pastor of the Upper King and Queen Church. The first person that Mr. Noel baptized, after he was ordained, was a young woman: her brother promised, to dip any person, that should dip her. In fulfilment of his word, he made the at-

tempt, but could not get Mr. Noel under the water. Being pursued by some of the wicked, who resented this treatment to the preacher, he was obliged to make the best of his way off: he died a few weeks after, having first sent for Mr. Noel to ask pardon. Mr. Noel's talents as a preacher seem to be singularly calculated for a revival; hence, from this or some other cause, since the revival has declined, his popularity, as a preacher, is considerably lessened; his friends however, hope to see him blaze forth again, in his last days. Upper Essex church, has been, in one sense a little like the burning bush; they have had from the first, much of the fire of contention among themselves, and yet they are a respectable church; they have no pastor, but procure the stated services of neighboring preachers: they have some very worthy private members.

PISCATAWAY.

This church is under the care of the Rev. James Greenwood, as may be seen by the table. From its constitution, Mr. Greenwood has been the faithful minister of this people. The church under his care has prospered without intermission. In '88 and 1804 there were precious revivals, in each of which years a respectable number was added to the church: but it is worthy of note, that even in the coldest and dullest seasons, this church still gradually gained strength, enjoying uniform serenity and peace. Elder Greenwood has been for sometime in a very low state of health, but the friends of piety begin to hope that he will recover, and that God will add a few more years to so useful a life: for, if it were said, that of all religious characters, he is the most spotless, all who know him, himself excepted, would pronounce it a well-merited eulogy. He is now (1809) about sixty years of age, and has been truly a labourer in the Lord's vineyard, nearly or quite forty years. From Piscataway was constituted in 1790, Bruington, under the care of Robert B. Semple.

GLEBE LANDING.

This is a mother church, for the account of her origin see General History. Wm. Mullin was their pastor for many years, and a faithful one he was; during his continuance among them, order and peace prevailed; they were revived by divine grace in the year 1788, when about one hundred were added; the church was happy, and gradually increased until the year 1792, when God called home their faithful and diligent pastor. No church probably ever felt the loss of so valuable a preacher less than they did that of Mr. Mullin; for they immediately procured the stated monthly services of elder Lewis, who has attended them ever since. As to discipline, they had several old and experienced members, who were fully competent to the task of setting things in order. Of these, Richard Street was first appointed moderator, he dying in some short time, they appointed John Sadler, who lived many years and during his life, discharged the duties of his office with as much diligence, judgement, and success, as any minister in Virginia could have done. These may be called emphatically the precious sons of Zion. They have entered into their rest and their works will follow them.

Mr. Mullin as a preacher could not be said to rank high. His talents in the pulpit were not conspicuous, yet he might be called a solid and sound experimental preacher. He was a judicious disciplinarian, and in preserving order he succeeded better than common. He died, in full hope and assurance of a resurrection to a better life.

HERMITAGE.

This is a church of long standing, having been constituted off from Glebe Landing, under the care of John Mullin. During his life, they enjoyed peace and prosperity, in a moderate degree; but about the year '93 or '94, they lost their pastor. Soon after his death, John Healey was ordained to the pastoral care, having long exercised a public gift among them.

In 1802 he also died. Since his death, the church has had no pastor, but are favoured with the monthly services of elder Lewis. They have also two gifted members, viz. James Healy, ordained; and Samuel Jesse, licensed. These are old Baptists, but young preachers thrust into the vineyard at the eleventh hour. Being faithful, they will doubtless receive their penny. Mr. Healey attends Pocorone church in the nature of a pastor, though not regularly installed. Mr. John Mullin was among the first who professed vital faith in those parts, in which he resided. From the time of his profession, to the day of his death, he had the reputation of being a spotless christian. He was indeed a good man, though not an able preacher. His life was good preaching, to all who knew him. As he lived, so he died, beloved of God and approved of men.

ZOAR.

This church was stricken off from Hermitage, under the charge of elder David Corey, but in the midst of their flattering prospects, the great shepherd and bishop, has in the mysteries of his providence, thought proper to snatch from them their beloved pastor; he died Feb. 1809, lamented, deeply lamented, by every good man that knew him. Capt. Corey was a native of New-England, but came to Virginia and professed religion, at an early period of life. It was not, however, until he had been baptized fifteen or sixteen years, that he began to preach. He laboured only five or six years in the ministry; during that time, he did much good, round about in his neighborhood. He had followed sea-faring, for a livelihood for many years, but in consequence of its interference with his ministry, he had in a great measure laid it aside, and commenced farmer.

PETTSWORTH, OR GLOUCESTER.

The gospel first made its way into this neighborhood, through the ministry of elder Lewis. Mr. Robert Hudgin, a native of Mathews, had moved into this

part of Gloucester, but in some of his visits to Matthews, having heard Mr. Lewis preach, he invited him to come into his neighborhood, which he did in the year '75. His labours were productive of great good. Several joined the society, and finally a church was constituted, under the care of Robert Hudgin, who began to preach, soon after he was baptized.— This church continued to prosper moderately, until Mr. Hudgin's death. They were then left without any person to go out and in before them. They, at length did, what it would hardly have been supposed, would have been done by Virginians: They chose for their pastor Wm. Lemon, a man of colour: he, though not white, as to his natural complexion, had been washed in the laver of regeneration: he had been purified and made white, in a better sense. As a preacher, though weak, he was lively and affecting. He also died after several years; since then they have been destitute of stated ministerial aid: Mr. Wm. Leigh exercises a public gift, and it is said, is useful. The methodists are numerous in these parts.

ABINGDON.

This church in the lower end of Gloucester, was taken off from Pettsworth. The members chiefly live in that part which has been sometimes called Guinea. When Mr. Lewis first preached in this neighborhood, he met with violent opposition from individuals; but treating them with lenity and meekness, he soon made many of them as friendly, as they had been hostile. This church is under the care of Robert Stacy, a sound, good preacher.— They appear to be happy under his ministry.

MATHEWS.

As early as the year 1771, one Johnson, a Baptist, preached within the bounds of this church; his preaching left no durable impression: in '72 or '73, Rev. Ivison Lewis, who was not yet baptized, went down on a visit to his relations, who lived in this county, and

having lately obtained a hope of salvation, he was zealous to inculcate the necessity of vital religion, wherever he went. His conversation made such impressions upon the minds of those, with whom he conversed, that it was rumoured about in the neighborhood, that a new preacher had come among them: this drew out a large company of people, to the house where Mr. Lewis staid, to hear him preach, without any previous appointment. Mr. Lewis having never attempted to preach in regular form, felt much alarmed; but, relying upon supernatural aid, he went on to address the people. God unstopped their ears and opened their hearts. They received his doctrine, as from God. Mr. Lewis not long after, became a Baptist and a preacher, and continued to visit Mathews with much success. A number of respectable characters professed faith, and were baptized. Mr. Lewis, though he lived above forty miles off, visited this place once a month for several years. In the year '82, the church induced David Tinsley to settle among them; his labours were not as beneficial as was hoped. In the course of two or three years, viz. 1785, he moved off to Georgia, where turning an Arminian, he joined the General Baptists, headed by Jeremiah Walker. Tinsley was a good preacher, and had been in the early part of his ministry, considerably successful as an itinerant.

After Mr. Tinsley's removal, Mathews church had no preacher, until John Gayle, a gifted member, was ordained; under his ministry, and the ministry of visiting preachers, they had a great revival in the year '87; several hundreds were baptized. By many judicious professors, this revival was thought not to have been prudently conducted, as it respected some of the leading visiting ministers. Persons were baptized upon too slight reasons, as many thought.—This circumstance, added to the slackness of their discipline, produced a good deal of unhappiness, after the revival subsided. Nor indeed have they since,

ever completely regained that regularity and order, so necessary to the full enjoyment of religious society. In many respects, however, this is a commendable church, having some who have not defiled their garments. They long tried, to procure a preacher of talents, to reside among them, but did not succeed entirely. For a few years, Mr. Jacob Creath, a preacher of popular talents, dwelt among them. He however married in Lancaster, and removed thither, and then went to Kentucky, where he still lives. A few years past, they made choice of Mr. Wm. Fitchet, a gifted man, and one of their own members, as a pastor. No persecution farther than reproaches and slander, has ever disgraced the people in this neighborhood.



CHAPTER XII.

*Historical Sketches of the Churches in the third Union
Meeting District, in Dover Association.*

HANOVER.

This church was taken off from Tuckahoe and Nomini. Jesse Davis, some years after their constitution, was inducted into the church as pastor. Before Mr. Davis became pastor, a Mr. Sthretchley used to preach and read sermons for them, but this not being satisfactory to the church, Mr. S. took umbrage, and joined the Methodists, and afterwards positively professed himself a deist.

Under Mr. Davis's ministry, Hanover has been a respectable and orderly church. Mr. Toler once attended them statedly.

NOMINI.

Mr. Lunsford was the first, who preached with success, in these parts: he had baptized a few scattered

members previous to the year '83. On this year elder Toler, who is now the pastor of this church, was invited by an old lady, who had been baptized by Mr. Lunsford, to preach in the neighborhood of the present meeting house; he went, and but few people attended; these were distant and reserved: none, but a very poor man, invited him to his house: Yet, how unsearchable are the ways of God! This meeting was the beginning of great events, as it respects this neighborhood. Mrs. Pearce, wife of Capt. Joseph Pearce, attended, having been in a low state of health for some time, the word reached her. When Mr. Toler attended again, Mrs. Pearce sent for him to Mr. Templeman's, her son-in-law, and had the preaching at his house, he being from home on a journey. His preaching made deep impressions upon her mind.—When Mr. Templeman returned, he was sorely displeased at the liberty which had been taken with his house, and talked of leaving it, as being contaminated. Before Mr. Toler came again, Mrs. Pearce died a great penitent; enjoining it on her husband, to open his house for preaching. To this Capt. Pearce consented, and had Mr. Toler's next meeting appointed at his house. Light dawned. The prejudices of the people wore off. Several persons of different classes were converted and baptized. Among them was Mr. Templeman mentioned above, and his wife; Capt. Pearce and some of his children, and in a few years, all of them, and some other people. This, says Mr. Toler,* *was a gracious, glorious, pleasant time.*—Those who had been baptized by Mr. Toler, together with a few others who had been baptized previous to his coming, were formed into a church April 29, 1786, having in all seventeen members. Elder Toler was chosen to attend them as pastor, and in a year or two moved here to live.

On the same day after the constitution of the church,

* This account of Norcini is taken, almost verbatim, from a manuscript furnished by Mr. Toler.

five others were baptized, and at the end of this year the number was seventy-three. In '87 it increased to one hundred and nineteen. In '88, to two hundred and twenty-two. In '89, to three hundred. In '90, to three hundred and thirty-one. In '91, to three hundred and forty-eight. In '92, to three hundred and fifty-four. In '93, to three hundred and fifty-seven. In '94, to three hundred and sixty-seven. In '95, to four hundred and eight. From this date, for ten years, there were but few additions. Order and discipline were preserved, but professors seemed to lack life and spirit in religion. By deaths and removals, the church was much reduced in number. The preachers continued their meetings, and afterwards found that even in this lifeless season, that their labours were not lost. This was a trying time, to the feelings of these public servants, especially to Mr. Toler, their pastor. So much was he worn down with discouragement, that he had strong thoughts of moving off. When every hope of another revival, was almost given up, quite unexpectedly in the early part of the Summer 1806, the work of God again appeared. In a small time, it spread to an extent beyond the former revival. In three months, ninety were baptized. At various times, thirty, forty, fifty and sixty, were baptized at once. So that from first to last, in this revival, there have been added between five and six hundred, mounting the church, from its low standing, up to eight hundred and seventy-five. The most numerous church in Virginia. This was a pure revival. Very little extravagance of any kind, was ever seen. The convictions appeared to be deep and powerful, and the conversions clear and rational. It was a harvest indescribably glorious.

Mr. Toler, the pastor of this church, became a Baptist at a very early period of life. He soon commenced public speaker, appearing to be promising, was assisted by a friend, to acquire a more extensive education ; having had rather limited opportunities,

previously accordingly he read under the tutorage of the Rev. Doctr. Samuel Jones in Pennsylvania.—His progress was considerable. After Mr. Toler left school, he became a correct, and handsome speaker. As a speaker he was sound and experimental, affectionate in his address, and when animated himself, very animating to his hearers. Few preachers, having families, have been more indefatigable in propagating the gospel than Mr. Toler. He has been in the service now between 30 and 40 years.

Mr. Templeman mentioned above, began to preach soon after he was baptized, and was ordained anno. 1792. Having been long accustomed to public life, as an active magistrate, as a merchant, and as one, who is often called on to transact the affairs of others, Mr. Templeman has divided his attention, between these employments and his ministry. It is hardly probable, that many, if any, can be found in Virginia, who have succeeded so completely, in giving satisfaction in so many various occupations.—There are but few that ever heard him, who do not think him a good preacher; and it happens, unfortunately in some respects, that himself is one of those few, for it is exceeding difficult to get him to preach where there are any others. As a man of business, both as it respects integrity and cleverness, he is universally esteemed by all who know him. In 1807, he was chosen Moderator to the association, and acquitted himself with general approbation. His absence, prevented his continuance in that office. Besides these, there are other preachers and public speakers in this church. Of these, Mr. Hazard has been ordained.

Besides those remaining in this extensive church, they have lost some distinguished members. Capt. Pearce, mentioned above, from the time of his profession until his death, was a pious and steady member, as well as an excellent deacon. His house was a house of preaching, as well as prayer.

Mrs. Steptoe, a lady of the first rank, both as to family and fortune, was long a member of this society. She was an ornament to religion. She took her seat in the church about 1786. In her will, she left an annuity of ten pound per annum to Mr. Toler, so long as he should remain pastor of Nomin church.

Robert Carter, Esq. once a member of the Virginia executive council, and on that account commonly called Counsellor Carter, was baptized by Mr. Lunsford, shortly after he began to preach in these parts. He was one of the richest men in the state of Virginia, having, as some say, seven or eight hundred negroes, besides immense bodies of land, &c. After being baptized, some years, he became conscientious about the lawfulness of hereditary slavery. In a letter to Mr. Rippon of London, he says, "*The toleration of slavery, indicates very great depravity of mind.*" In conformity to this sentiment, he gradually emancipated the whole that he possessed.

This was a noble and disinterested sacrifice. For fourteen or fifteen years he continued an orderly Baptist. But being a man, naturally, of an unstable disposition, and falling in with certain Arminian writings, he fully embraced their doctrines. Had he stopped here, he might still have continued in the Baptist society, though not so happily as before. But alas! there are so many wrong roads in religious pursuits, that when a man once gets wrong, it is impossible to foresee where he will stop. From the Arminian errors, Mr. Carter fell into the chimerical whims of Swedenburg. When he first heard of the books of Swedenburg, he made very light of them; but upon reading them, having a mind naturally fond of specious novelty, he fully embraced the whole of that absurd system, and was of course excluded from the Baptists. He was now, as zealous for the New Jerusalem church,* as he had been formerly for the Baptists. He moved to Baltimore, in order to find a

* A name by which Swedenburg's followers designate themselves.

preacher, and a society of his own sentiments, and expended large sums of money to have Swedenburg's writings republished. He continued orderly in his moral conduct, and died a few years since, after having lived to a considerable age. Mr. Toler's amiable character may be gathered from his labours described above.

FARNHAM.

This church was raised under the united labours of James Greenwood and Wm. Mullin. About '76, Mr. Greenwood was invited by a Mrs. Sucket, who lived in Richmond county, on Rappahannock, to preach at her house. Before he went, he was apprehensive of considerable opposition, but was agreeably disappointed. The people were attentive. Being encouraged, he and Mr. Wm. Mullin continued to visit them, preaching at private houses, until a stage and seats were fixed. They were sometimes threatened to be treated roughly, but these threats never were executed. Their labours proved effectual, and several were baptized, and a church constituted. Mr. Mullin continued to visit them statedly, for twelve or thirteen years, and the church prospered. After him, they chose Mr. Philips for their pastor, who had been raised among them. Mr. P. not being a man of popular talents, the church rather declined, until a little time before his death, which happened in the Spring of 1805. Truly, could it be said of Mr. P. that his last days were his best days. For two or three years, times were much better and the church looked up. He baptized a considerable number within about two years before he died. He is one of the very few, concerning whom, there is any good ground to suppose, that his death was brought on by the ordinance of baptism. Having several persons to baptize, on a cold, damp day, and having also to preach out of doors on a stage, where he was much exposed to the wind, he observed to some of his friends, *that he had rather wear out, than rust out*, and went on with his ser-

vice. In a few days, he was taken with a pleurisy. In his illness, he appeared to have and to enjoy the divine presence, in a glorious manner, so long as he was in his senses ; and even in his delirium, his conversation, though incoherent, was almost wholly upon religion. Just before he died, he said, with a strong voice, “ *Come let us go,*” and immediately fell asleep. If any shall say, here is an instance of baptism killing a person, we reply, so it may be ; yet, it proves, that God blesses the ordinance; either by preventing any evil, even where it might reasonably be looked for, or that, permitting the evil, he makes it terminate in the greatest good. Since Mr. P’s. death, they have had no pastor, but have had preaching from neighbouring ministers, and from some licensed preachers in their own church.

WICOMICO.

This church was taken off in the year 1804, from Moratico, and constituted under the care of elder Samuel Straughn. Few churches enjoy more harmony and brotherly love, than this. They seek not their own things, but the things of Jesus Christ. As it is a new church, there has nothing extraordinary occurred worthy of notice, except that soon after their constitution, they had a comfortable revival, which swelled their number from twenty, to two hundred and forty.

Mr. Straughn was baptized about the year 1803, and after some time began to preach. His gifts are of the most useful sort. He is “ *an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures.*” As he is still young, we will only add, our devout wishes, that he may go on in the way he has begun, and that he may abound more and more.

MORATICO.

This has been a church of as high standing, as any in the Dover Association. Mr. Lunsford was the

most successful Baptist preacher in these parts. Soon after he first visited them, his labours were blessed, and the church was constituted, including all the members within the four or five lowest counties in the Northern Neck. It appears, from their church book, that in no great while after they were organized as a church, they were respectable both for numbers and for men of weight. Mr. Lunsford was their pastor, from the time of their constitution, until his death: Never was minister more beloved by a people, and never, probably, was there one that deserved it more. He has now been dead more than fifteen years, and yet he is seldom mentioned, by any of the members of the church, without some lamentation. [*See more of him in his Biography.*]

When Mr. Lunsford died they were left destitute. Mr. Toler attended them statedly, for some time, but being nearly forty miles from them, he could not perform those duties which were requisite. In the year 1799, Mr. Jacob Creath married, and settled within the bounds of the church. Mr. Creath being a man of talents, the church soon called upon him to take the pastoral care, which he accepted. Under his ministry, they seemed rather to rise; but in a few years, Mr. Creath became dissatisfied with his circumstances, and in order to better them, moved to Kentucky, anno. 1803. The church was again left destitute. Mr. Toler and others visited them occasionally until about 1808, when they procured the stated services of elder Samuel Straughn, a preacher who has the care of Wicomico church, and who had been baptized by Mr. Creath, just before he moved. The church, from the time of Mr. Lunsford's death, had by deaths, removals, &c. gradually declined; but few were baptized. But within three or four years past, all the churches in the Northern Neck, belonging to the Dover association, have somewhat revived. Moratico among the rest, has gained some ground, though by no means equal to some others. The re-

mains of a respectable congregation of Presbyterians are still in this neighbourhood. This congregation once had the celebrated Mr. Waddell for their minister. Since his removal, they have declined, until but few remain. Their meeting house is occupied by the Baptists chiefly.

CHAPTER XIII.

History of the proceedings of the Orange and Goshen Associations, from 1788, until the present time.

THE proceedings of the two districts North of James River, from the division of the General Association in '83, to the sub-division in '88, have already been given.

After the separation from the Dover, the Orange Association met, for the first time, at Crooked Run meeting house, in Culpeper county, May 8th, 1789. Letters from twenty-two churches were received, affording the most pleasing intelligence of the spread of the gospel, and of the increase of the churches.

October 9th, 1789.—They met at Pamunkey meeting house, in Orange county.

June 4th, 1790.—Mr. Leland, as moderator, called an extraordinary session of the association at Thomson's meeting-house, Louisa county.

October 8th, 1790.—They met at Carter's Run meeting house, in Fauquier county.

October 13th, 1791.—They met at Rappadan meeting house, Culpeper county, (now Madison.)*

There was no business transacted at any of these sessions, which will not be noticed in some more convenient place; except the division of Orange district into three others, by which the name Orange was dropped. The entry for the division is in the following words:

"We have agreed to divide our association into three district associations, as follows: Beginning at Fredericksburg; thence up the Rappahannock River, to Barret's Ford; thence along the Carolina road, to

* Messrs. Waller and Leland acted alternately as clerk and moderator, until Mr. Leland removed to New-England in 1790, when Mr. John Poindexter was appointed clerk, and continued until the division of the associatio

the Three Notched Road ; thence down the same, to the Byrd Ordinary ; thence down the Byrd Creek, to James River, to compose one association, to be known by the name of "Goshen Associotion.." Secondly ; beginning at Barret's Ford ; thence up the Rappadan, to the head of the same, leaving Blue Run Church to her choice which of the two upper associations she chooses to join. All the churches on the South side of the said boundaries, to compose a second association, which is to be known by the name of the " Albemarle Association." Thirdly ; *all the churches on the North side of the said boundaries, to compose a third association, to be known by the name of the "Culpeper Association."*

Of these three districts we must treat separately, beginning with the Goshen.

TABLE OF THE GOSHEN ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Waller's, | 1769 | 30 | 285 | S. Harriss, & James Read. | J. Waller. | A. Waller. | Spottsylvania, |
| Mine's Road, | 1791 | 40 | 35 | J. Waller. | H. Pendleton. | H. Pendleton. | do. |
| Craig's, | 1767 | 25 | 21 | S. Harriss, & James Read. | L. Craig. | E. Abel. | do. |
| Pyney Branch | 1789 | 40 | 40 | J. Waller. | H. Goodloe. | H. Goodloe. | do. |
| Massaponax, | 1785 | 25 | 198 | T. Mastin. | T. Mastin. | A. Waller. | do. |
| Wilderness, | 1778 | 25 | 180 | Jos. Bledsoe, L. Craig and A. Dudley. | J. Bledsoe, A. Bledsoe. | E. Ely. | do. |
| Guineas, | 1774 | 45 | 175 | J. Waller. | N. Holloway. | A. Waller. | do. |
| Fredericksburg, | 1804 | 15 | 51 | A. Broadbush. | A. Broadbush. | A. Broadbush. | do. |
| Zoar, | 1805 | 25 | 45 | J. Leland. | Nat. Saunders. | | do. |
| County Line, | 1782 | | 97 | J. Waller. | W. Waller, J. Waller. | A. Waller. | Caroline & Spottsylvania. |
| Bethel, | 1800 | 66 | 108 | A. Broadbush. | A. Broadbush. | A. Broadbush. | Caroline. |
| Burrus's, | 1773 | 71 | 205 | S. Harriss, & J. Read. | J. Waller. | A. Broadbush. | do. |
| William's, | | | 130 | J. Waller and J. Leland. | J. W. H. Goodloe, J. Poindexter | E. Purrington. | Goochland & Louisa. |
| Licking Hole, | 1776 | 35 | 500 | J. Waller and R. Ford. | R. Ford & H. French. | L. Page. | Goochland |
| Thomson's, or Goldmine. | 1770 | 16 | 85 | S. Harriss, & J. Read. | D. Thompson, J. Leland, & G. Morris. | W. Waller. | Louisa. |
| Roundabout, | 1791 | 50 | 226 | J. Waller. | J. Poindexter. | J. Poindexter. | do. |
| Scarrot's, | 1777 | 60 | 64 | J. Waller. | W. Dawson | H. Goodloe. | do. |
| Little River, | 1791 | 65 | 75 | J. Waller. | J. and A. Waller. | W. Cook. | do. |
| N. Fork, Pamunkey. | 1774 | 20 | 180 | E. Craig and A. Bledsoe. | A. Bledsoe. | | Orange. |

This association contains all the churches in the counties of Spottsylvania and Louisa, together with a part of those in Caroline, Hanover, Goochland and Orange.

They held their first meeting at Roundabout meeting house, Louisa county, Friday 17th October 1792. Letters were received from fifteen churches, eleven of which sent an account of their numbers in full fellowship, amounting to 1434, in which, also, it was stated, that there had been 170 baptized in the course of the preceding year. In no church, is any revival mentioned, except at the Roundabout, where elder John Poindexter had the pastoral care. In that church there had been one hundred and nine baptized in the course of one year.

No business of a general nature was transacted, and indeed very little of any sort. The next association was appointed at Burrus's meeting house in Caroline ct'y.

October 18th, 1793.---They met according to appointment. Letters were received from 16 churches. Two only speak of a revival, viz. Salem and Roundabout; the rest complain of great coldness and languor. The Rev. John Waller, the oldest minister in the association, and among the oldest in Virginia, applied to the association for, and received a letter of recommendation, having resolved to move to S. Carolina.

It was agreed to print the present minutes. The next association was appointed at Thompson's meeting house, Louisa county.

Oct. 17th, 1794.—They met according to appointment. They were visited by John Waller, a father in this association. Letters from 17 churches were read. Several churches speak of hopeful appearances, but none of revivals. Since the last association, it appears, that in all the churches there were 126 baptized. No business of a general nature was transacted. The next association was appointed at Bledroe's meeting house, Orange county, beginning on the third Saturday in October.*

* Upon trial, it was found more convenient for the association to commence their sessions on Saturdays, and adjourn on Mondays.

Saturday, Oct. 17th, '95.—They met according to appointment. Letters from 17 churches were read. A complaint of coldness is universal in all the churches. The association recommended a day of fasting and prayer, to be observed throughout the churches, to avert the dangers apprehended from the treaty of amity and commerce, between Great Britain and America. This measure, doubtless, arose from the violent party heat, which, at that time, agitated the minds of Americans generally, and which it seems, frequently made its way into the pulpit and religious assemblies. If the association stepped out of her province, by an interference in political measures, she seems to have done it, in a safe way. Fasting and prayer will seldom do us much injury, although we may be put to it, from strange causes.

The following query was introduced: "*Has a minister a right to baptize persons, and join them to a church at a remote distance;*" which was answered in the negative. From this query and solution, it seems, great disturbance arose. George Morris, an ordained minister, had been in the habit of violating this rule. When the subject was debated in the association, Mr. Morris became so exasperated, that he abruptly left his seat, and went home. Continuing still to profess the same principles, and publicly to censure the association for their decision, and thereby to create no little confusion; the moderator by the advice of friends, thought proper to call a conference, *i. e.* a kind of occasional association. The conference accordingly met at Waller's meeting house, on the first Saturday in January 1796. Thirteen churches were represented, and Morris was present. The moderator, by the instruction of the conference, asked Morris such questions as tended to effect a reconciliation, if it was possible; but Morris continued refractory. Whereupon, he was censured by the conference, and cited to appear at the next association, to answer for his conduct. At the next association no reconciliation could be ef-

fects, and a committee was appointed to deal with Morris, before his churches. The committee reported, that they had settled the existing difference, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. This, however, was but the beginning of trouble arising from Morris. The next association was appointed at Waller's meeting house, Spottsylvania county.

Oct. 15th, 1796.—They met according to adjournment. Only 12 churches were represented: Three, under the care of George Morris, adhered to him, in his contest with the association, and at this session wrote to the association, remonstrating in favour of Morris. A committee was appointed by the association to visit and admonish these churches. Their return, is in these words:

"The committee are happy to inform the churches, that they have settled the existing differences, to the satisfaction of Elder Morris, and his churches."

For the credit of religion, it is devoutly to be wished that this reconciliation had been permanent. But the sequel will shew, that Morris was not for peace.

It had been a rule, hitherto, for the association to appoint quarterly meetings, from year to year, in the different parts of the district. At this session, a yearly meeting, to last two days, was agreed on, in lieu of quarterly meetings:* the ministers to attend them, were nominated by the association, and responsible for failure,

It is pleasing to find, from the record of this association, that, in the midst of distress, the Lord remembered mercy to some of the churches. Two churches speak of a comfortable revival. The next association was appointed at Burrus's meeting house, Caroline county.

Oct. 21, '97.—They met according to appointment. Letters were received from 17 churches, most of whom complain of coldness. Some precious exceptions however, are made. The churches at Waller's, Burrus's

* It is since changed to four days.

and Williams's meeting houses, speak the language of praise. At this association was elder John Leland, from New-England: his preaching, *was not in words only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost*. No business worthy of historical attention was transacted. It was an agreeable time. The next association was appointed at Foster's creek meeting house, Louisa county.

October 20th, 1798.—They met according to appointment. Letters from 16 churches were received. With scarcely an exception, they all expressed sad complaints of a declension in religion. No important matter was taken up. Except the revival of the confession of faith. The next association was appointed at Wilderness meeting house Spotsylvania county.

October 19th, 1799.—Letters from 18 churches were received. It appears to have been a comfortable season. The following is an extract from the general observations made in the record-book. Nothing of the pleasing kind appears on the face of the letters, except a spirit of general love and union. It was at this session that elder H. French, and his church at Licking Hole, was received as a part of this association. No business of a general nature, not mentioned elsewhere, occupied their attention at this session. The next association was appointed at County Line meeting house, Caroline county, to commence on the 3d Friday in October.

October 16th, 1801.—Letters from 21 churches were received, all of whom, either say, that they are in a state of languor, or, that the revival is in a state of declension. Winter and Summer do not more regularly succeed each other in the natural world, than revivals and declensions, in the religious. A good God makes them both subserve his purpose. The next association was appointed at Roundabout meeting house, to commence the second Saturday in October.

During this year, a mournful scene took place. George Morris, (of whose turbulent deportment towards the association, mention has already been made,) a preacher of some talents, who had the pastoral and partial care of three churches, was by common report charged with crimes of the deepest dye. Such was his influence with the church, of which he was a member, that notwithstanding the reports were well authenticated, they paid no attention to them until urged to it by a committee appointed by the association. Morris contrived to keep back many of the charges, and finally to obtain from the church, a favourable decision as to such as were exhibited. The moderator of the association, who was one of the committee, finding the matter thus smothered, to the disgrace of religion, called the association together. They met in conference at Waller's meeting house, on the 4th Saturday in February. 20 churches sent deputies. After a fair and full investigation of the business before the conference, it was decided that Morris was guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, and that the church had manifested a criminal partiality in retaining him in her fellowship. The church was excluded from the association, and a committee appointed by the conference, to visit them, for the purpose of pronouncing the sentence of exclusion, as also to invite a minority of the church, who differed from the other part, to form a church among themselves.

The new church, under the name of Goldmine, was accordingly constituted, and in a little time was joined by several of the majority. But what was more consoling, they were blessed with the out-pouring of the holy spirit. A precious revival ensued. Many were added by baptism. Morris and his party, as being the majority, retained the old meeting house, and kept up preaching. But to them none were disposed to unite themselves. After a vain attempt for two or three years to stand upon indepen-

dent ground, being forsaken by their most respectable members, Morris proposed that he and his party should again coalesce with the Goldmine church, by making concessions: To this, the Goldmine church replied, *that they were at all times, ready to hear what any individuals of them had to say, but could not receive them as a body, seeing this, would recognize in them, a character, which they had hitherto discountenanced.* Another reason, it was said, existed for not receiving them into their body, viz. *there were among them, many persons, under the imputation of gross immoralities.* So the matter rests. Morris, and some of the most obstinate of his party, continue out of communion. The churches called Salem and Bethesda, of whom Morris had the ministerial care, adhered to him in his contest. These churches were also expelled from the association, and a new one formed out of the minority, received. In these proceedings, some, who were by no means favourable to Morris, were of opinion, that the association were in some of her measures, rather precipitate; not using, towards the churches deluded by Morris, a sufficient degree of lenity. Such opinions, were probably induced by a partial view of the subject, especially thro' the want of sufficient acquaintance with the intriguing temper of Morris. The following is a short comment made on his character by the secretary, and sanctioned by the association.

‘ Like Diotrephes he loved and sought the pre-eminence. Jealousy and discontent apparently were his inseparable concomitants. In a word, he was not unlike Jude’s wandering stars, always unsteady, until they shoot in some eccentric direction, and disappear forever.’

Having given a succinct account of this schism, from first to last, it is proper to return to the common proceedings of the association.

October 15th, 1802.—The association met according to appointment. Letters were received from 18

churches. The comment made by the secretary, as to the state of religion, is in the following words:

"It appears as if poor Zion will shake to her centre, and her watchmen proclaim, the glory is departed from Israel. Yet the mighty God of Jacob is still the same, and his everlasting arms are underneath the mourning sons of Zion. Several of our churches seem to enjoy gentle breezes of divine grace," &c. &c.

In Bethel church, one of the constituents of this association, a rule had been formed, by a large majority, compelling each person, under the penalty of the displeasure of the church, to contribute towards her expences, according to what he was worth. This rule, gave great umbrage, not only to a minority in the church, but to other churches likewise. At this association, a query was introduced in the following words:

"Does the association approbate a church that raises money, by assessing her members?"

Which received the following solution:

"We do not approbate the method of raising money by assessments, upon the principle of its not being sanctioned by new testament examples, and the general principles of the Baptists, and because of the unhappy consequences, which may result from such a practice."

Would not the solution to this query, have been better thus?

The new testament certainly requires of every member of a church to contribute to the expences of religion, according to what he hath; but says nothing how this must be carried into effect; leaving the mode of collecting discretionary. We are therefore persuaded, that the above mode is lawful: but all things that are lawful, are not expedient. We are of opinion that, at this time, this mode is not expedient, because of the prejudices of many, who have not rightly considered the subject.

This was an agreeable session. The next association was appointed at Licking Hole meeting house.

October 15th, 1803.—Letters from 16 churches were read. The comment made by the secretary was, “*That the letters breath the spirit of universal love and harmony, but complain of coldness.*” Of the association, he says, “*Much peace and love prevailed, among the members of this association, during the whole session.*”

It was at this session, they first took up the business of composing a history of the Baptists, in the Goshen district, and accordingly made an order requesting the churches to send accounts to the next association. This plan was afterwards relinquished in favour of the present work. The next association was appointed at Bethel meeting house, Caroline county.

October 20th, 1804.—Letters from 18 churches were read. In a few churches revivals are mentioned. All the churches seem to enjoy peace. The next association was appointed at Waller’s meeting house.

October 19th, 1805.—Letters were received from 18 churches. Two or three churches speak of revivals. From the foregoing association 216 had been baptized. The next association was appointed at Goldmine meeting house, Louisa county.

October 18th, 1806---Letters from 18 churches were received. No revival; yet times were rather promising than otherwise. The subject of encouraging missionaries, was taken up in this session. The association expressed her approbation of encouraging missionaries, to travel and preach the gospel among the Indian tribes, provided any practicable plan could be invented.

During the foregoing year, and for many years, the churches had been much imposed upon by certain impostors, who went under the appellation of Baptist preachers. In order to detect such characters, the association entered into the following resolution :

“ In order to detect impostors travelling through the churches, under the name of licensed or ordained

Baptist preachers, this association resolves to adopt the following method, viz.

“Every stranger coming under the name of a Baptist preacher, shall produce to the church where he may preach, or have opportunities to preach, a copy of the minutes of the association, where he professes himself a member, shewing his name in the list of delegates. The minutes to be dated within one year.”

The association authorised the secretary to publish this resolution in some public paper printed in the city of Richmond, recommending and requesting, at the same time, the adoption of a similar rule by all our sister associations in the state. Nothing could be more salutary than a regulation of this sort. The society had been much disgraced by some of these miscreants, who had been fostered by unexperienced well-meaning Baptists. The next association was appointed at Guinea's Bridge meeting house.*

Several excellent circular letters were written for this association by Messrs. A. Broaddus, A. Waller and John Poindexter, alternately; but being chiefly on doctrines of divinity, often treated of in religious books, they have not been noticed.



CHAPTER XIV.

Historical Sketches of the Churches, in Goshen Association.

WALLER'S.

This is a mother church indeed. Their corresponding letter to the association in 1791, says, “We have lately constituted two new churches, which make fif-

* Although there have been several sessions since 1806, yet as our manuscript was finished previous to receiving any information of them, we can only say there was nothing very remarkable.

teen, that have been taken off from our church." She was first called Lower Spottsylvania, in contradistinction to Upper Spottsylvania, now called Craig's. Elder John Waller was chosen pastor January 2d, '70, which was a few months after the church was constituted: he continued to fill that office, until '93, when he moved to S. Carolina. When Mr. J. Waller declared himself independent, this church adhered to him, and was of course excluded from the association. When he was reinstated, so was the church. It is worthy of remark, that although Mr. Waller was an Arminian, and on that account broke with the association, and carried with him this church, yet the church was far from being unanimously Arminian. Some of Mr. Waller's nearest relatives, stood firm to the gospel plan. At one time, previous to Mr. Waller's reinstatement into the association, there were few, if any less, than 1500 members in this church. Although she has had various ebbs and flows, and knows well the difference between declensions and revivals, yet few, if any, have experienced more uninterrupted prosperity. Of so much importance to the good-standing of a church, is an exemplary preacher, who understands the art of combining the hearts of all, in one great object. It seemed providential, that, when their former pastor who had grown old, and thought proper to change his place of residence, their present pastor was ripe, both in talents and experience, to fill his place; and it would seem, had obtained his uncle's mantle and a double portion of his spirit, for under his care, the church has flourished more, than under that of their first pastor.— They have one of the best built and most comfortable meeting houses, in Virginia. For, however the Baptists may excel in matters of greater magnitude, they cannot be admired for the elegance or convenience of their houses of worship.

In '87, the set time to favour this part of Zion arrived, and under the ministry of elder Harris who was

now on a visit to them, this revival bursted forth, on every hand, nor did the war cease, until many of the sons and daughters of the enemy of God, fell as victims to invincible grace. About 200 were baptized. In '96, as if to encourage their young and ardent pastor, God granted a heavenly move, among the people, and Mr. Waller baptized fifty-four. Few years have elapsed, in which there were not some baptized.

MINE ROAD.

This is a small church, taken off from Waller's in '91. Mr. Henry Pendleton, was ordained to the care of the church, at the time of the constitution. From first to last, this church has rather dragged on heavily, having had no revival, or none to any extent. Their present number is now less than at their first constitution.

They have however, some useful members, among whom is Mr. Henry Pendleton, senior, father of the preacher, and himself a preacher, in another sense.---He preaches by a pious walk and godly conversation. He is now a venerable old man, of about fourscore years of age.

Henry Pendleton, their first pastor, was, until a few years before his death, considered a very pious and rational man. He had fallen into the Arminian system, to which he adhered in all its branches, but being viewed as a pious man, was held in estimation, Strange to tell, in 1800, he put an end to his own existence, by shooting himself. His conduct for some length of time previous to this fatal extent, indicated some degree of melancholy insanity: To this state of mind, charity requires us, to ascribe an act so unpardonable, if perpetrated by one not in a state of insanity.

Elder Philip Pendleton, is their present pastor.

CRAIG'S.

This church, formerly called Upper Spottiyvania, is the oldest constitution between James and Rappa-

hannock rivers. It was not until November '70, about three years after their constitution that they received Lewis Craig as pastor. Under his care, and previously, this was a flourishing church. In '76, the word of God grew mightily among them, and one hundred were added. But in '81, to the great mortification of the remaining members, Mr Craig with most of the church, moved to Kentucky. Soon after this event, this mother church was obliged to relinquish her constitution. In '88, being reinforced by some new recruits, they resumed their constitution. They have not flourished of late, as much as some other churches; yet their number, though small, contains some worthy characters, on whose shoulders the government of the church seems chiefly to rest.

For a season, they had elder Ephraim Abel for their pastor, but he also moved away. At present, elder Edward Elly attends them occasionally.

PYNEY BRANCH.

This church was taken off from Waller's. Their meeting house is about twelve or fourteen miles from Fredericksburg. They have had, from first to last, as their pastor, elder Henry Goodloe. Nothing remarkable has occurred in this church. Their course has been smooth and even, having had neither revivals, nor declensions, worthy of note. They began with the number of forty, and they continue nearly at the same stand.

Elder Jeremiah Chandler, has lately become a minister here, and has been useful in the ministry. The church appears, of late, rather to be on the increase.

MASSAPONAX.

This church is in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Messrs. Dudley, Schackleford and Mason, had preached with some success in this neighbourhood, previous to the year '85, when Mr. Mastin moved among them. Some who were seals to the ministry of the

first named preachers, were baptized by Mr. Mastin. These, together with a considerable number who professed faith, under the ministry of Mastin, were constituted anno '88. Mr. Mastin was a confirmed Arminian, having been ordained to the ministry by Mr. J. Waller, in the time of his independence.—Most of those who had been profelyted by his ministry, received the stamp of his principles, whilst a respectable part of the church, who had been illumined through the ministry of others, were of Calvinistic sentiments. This diversity of opinion, was a source of great unhappiness among them. The Arminian party, were most numerous, and were not only unsound in principle, but negligent in discipline. It seems indeed, that Mr. Mastin, in receiving and baptizing members, was too remiss, which, together with the slackness of his discipline, after they were received, proved a source of much confusion and disorder. There were a few, who were much chagrined at these things. They took opportunities to remonstrate against them with the pastor, as also against his legal doctrines. He was displeased. In 1801, elder Hipkins Pitman, who was a supporter of Calvinism, moved into the bounds of this church.—His ministry being acceptable to that part of the church who coincided with him; Mr. Mastin grew jealous, and almost declined preaching among them. Finally, the contest rising to great height, the church withdrew from the care of Mr. Mastin, and chose Messrs. Pitman and A. Waller to attend them jointly. The ensuing year, Mr. Waller was called to take charge of the church, as a stated minister. Under him, as their preacher, they have been a happy people, and the church has increased.

WILDERNESS.

This is a numerous church, in the upper end of Spottsylvania. They had for their first pastor, Joseph Bledsoe. They were not happy under his care. When

he moved to Kentucky, his brother, Aaron Bledsoe, became their stated minister. In '88, they enjoyed the smiles of Heaven, in a precious revival, conducted chiefly under the ministry of Aaron Bledsoe. The church increased to one hundred and thirty. Mr. B's. labours were much blessed among them, until some unhappiness arising from his eccentric flights, he resigned his care,

Since that time, Mr. Edward Elly has been an occasional pastor for them. Mr. Elly is a worthy man, and a sound preacher. The church has enjoyed peace and harmony under his ministry.

It was in this church that Thomas Bridges, now a prisoner in the Penitentiary for horse-stealing, was baptized in '88. Bridges began to preach. Soon after, he was baptized; but being very illiterate, and of obscure parentage, he was not much noticed in his own neighbourhood. He was, however, so far encouraged by the church, as to obtain ordination: having from his youth, a propensity to lying, he was detected in this mean practice, after he commenced preacher: The church, however, admitting his excuses, did not exclude him. Feeling restless under these charges, he asked and obtained a letter of dismissal from the church: He now travelled off into Loudon, and the adjacent counties, where he became considerably popular as a preacher. He certainly had some talents. He was fluent in his delivery, and for his education, spoke in handsome language. His memory was exceedingly retentive, and he had after becoming a preacher, read a good deal. He had also a large stock of that kind of wit, which pleases without profiting; but, in point of judgment, he was probably as deficient as ever man was. His opinions upon subjects, that he had often studied and discussed, were always incorrect; upon others, he was a mere child. After all, it is not likely that Bridges would ever have become so entirely abandoned, had he not unfortunately married a wife with a considerable

estate; by which, his spirits being elevated far above their common level, he lost all the stock of prudence he previously possessed. Not accustomed to the management of property to any tolerable extent, he soon, very soon, spent what he had gotten by marriage. Still retaining the relish for his new sphere of action; but having lost all lawful resources, he strangely resorted to the shocking alternative of stealing horses. For which, being condemned in 1803, he was confined in the Penitentiary, where he is now.

GUINEA'S BRIDGE.

This church, so called from its vicinity to a bridge of that name, is a church of high-standing, having a number of pious and worthy members. The gospel was preached here, in its power and purity, at an early date after the rise of the Baptists. This place was not without its persecutors also. At one time, several preachers were apprehended, by virtue of a warrant from a magistrate; Among them was Joseph Craig, remarkable for his eccentric manners. On their way to the magistrate's house, Mr. Craig thinking it *no dishonour to cheat the devil*, as he termed it, slipped off the horse, and took to the bushes. They hunted him with dogs, but Asahel like, being light of foot, he made good his retreat.

The church was constituted under the care of Mr. N. Holloway. After various successs, Mr. Holloway left them, and moved to the county of Hallifax. They then procured the stated ministration of Elder John Waller, under whose care, they were prospered.

In 1787. the Lord poured out his spirit abundantly, and many were turned to righteousness, more than 100 were added. After the removal of Mr. J. Waller. in 1793, they were destitute of stated preaching, for several years. So great was the decline, that they had serious thoughts of dissolving

their constitution, but finally having obtained the regular ministrations of A. Waller, they again raised their heads. In 1800, they had the happiness to see a precious work of God among them. As many as 104 were baptized, and some of them were clever and useful men. Their meeting house is a very short distance from the county line, in Caroline. Mr. Waller still attends them.

FREDERICKSBURG.

This church, in the town of the same name, is a small but happy one. They have no resident pastor, but are supplied by Mr. A. Broaddus, who attends them monthly. If there is any objection to Mr. B's. ministry in this city, it is, that he is too popular with the irreligious. It may be said of him, as was said of Ezekiel.—“*Lo ! thou art unto them, as a very lovely song, of one, that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument : For they hear thy words, but they do them not.*” This remark by no means applies to the church, for although they hear with much pleasure, they practise with more. It is a young and rising church.

ZOAR.

This is a small church made up of certain members who felt themselves aggrieved by the conduct of the Salem and Black-Walnut churches, in the affair of Morris ; and therefore formed themselves into a separate church.

The two churches out of which Zoar arose were originally the fruits of Mr. John Leland's labours. Mr. Leland was a native of Worcester in Massachusetts, was baptized in 1774, and in the fall of 1776 he married and moved to Virginia and settled in the county of Orange in the neighbourhood of those churches. He continued in Virginia about fourteen years, in which time he travelled and preached very extensively and very successfully. He baptized be-

tween six and seven hundred persons while in the state, and in January 1791, he removed to Massachusetts, and settled in Cheshire. Mr. Leland, as a preacher, was probably the most popular of any that ever resided in this state. He is unquestionably a man of fertile genius. His opportunities for school learning, were not great; but the energetic vigour of his mind quickly surmounted this deficiency. His memory was so retentive, that by a single reading he stored up more of the contents of a book, than many would by a dozen careful perusals. It is probable that his knowledge derived from books, at this day, taken in the aggregate, is surpassed by few. His preaching, though immethodical and eccentric, is generally wise, warm and evangelical. There are not many preachers who have so great command of the attention and of the feelings of their auditory. In effecting this, his manner has been thought by some to approach too near to the theatrical. Cowper, the poet, says,

“He that negotiates between God and man,
“As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns
“Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
“Of lightness in his speech.”

Here Mr. Leland and the poet are at variance; he does sometimes, and indeed not unfrequently, “court the skittish fancy with facetious tales.” If Cowper says, so did not Paul; Leland can say, so did George Whitefield, Rowland Hill, &c. and they have been the most successful of modern preachers. Mr. Leland’s free and jocund manners, have excited the suspicions of some, that he wanted serious piety. His intimate friends, are confident that these are groundless suspicions. They believe, that, among his other singularities, he is singularly pious. While in Virginia, he wrote several treatises, and was certainly very instrumental in effecting the just and salutary regulations concerning religion, in this state. He has been similarly employed since his removal to New-

England. He has always been a zealous advocate for republican government. When Mr. Jefferson was raised to the Presidential chair, the ladies of Mr. Leland's congregation, made a cheese of immense size,* and sent it by Mr. Leland, as a present to Mr. Jefferson. This affair made no little noise in the United States.

COUNTY LINE.

This church was a part of those who broke off from the association with elder John Waller, and were constituted into a separate church, during his seclusion, having been previously an arm of the church called Waller's. After elder Waller made peace with the association, this church was received as a member. At her constitution, Mr. Wm. Waller was installed as her pastor, but he moving to Kentucky in '84, they procured the stated attendance of elder John Waller. Under his ministry in '87, the windows of grace were opened, and God reigned down righteousness among them. The church multiplied. When Mr. John Waller moved away, they procured the stated attendance of Mr. Absalom Waller. He still preaches for them, once a month. This is a church of considerable respectability.

BETHEL.

This church is in the neighbourhood of the Bowling Green, Caroline county. There are not many, if any churches in the Baptist connexion, more worthy of commendation than this. Though not large, they are, by all who know them, much respected for their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ. If Paul said, that the Thesalonians were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia, so may we say, that most of

* It was said to have had in it 1400 lb. of curd, and to have weighed 900 weight when taken from the press. The enemies of Jefferson called it the Mammoth Cheese: they also wrote poems and vented much wit upon the occasion. It was, however, received by the President with pleasure, and viewed by the impartial as a singular pledge of patriotism.

the members of this church, are ensamples to their coteremporaries. Their meetings are solemn, without austerity, and lively, without any mixture of enthusiasm: Their hospitality cordial without parade, and their manners simple and easy, without affectation. They love without dissimulation, and therefore, often meet, not only publicly, but from house to house, for social prayer and conversation. Though they have no resident ordained preacher, yet several of their members have occasionally exhorted, and preached in their assemblies. Elder A. Broaddus, pastor of Burruss's, attends here monthly. He is viewed as their father, and from him, as children from a father, they receive that counsel, by which they are nurtured up into everlasting life. Two of their most valuable members, have already finished their short, but happy course.

Mr. Charles Woolfork was a deacon at their first constitution. He discharged the duties of that office, with great fidelity and promptitude. Having been accustomed to genteel society, and having an independent fortune, he had it in his power to do many good acts, and to do them likewise with a good grace. He was a man of God. Living in this spotless manner, in a few years he fell asleep, deeply regretted by all his acquaintance; but by his family and the church, in a more singular degree.

Mr. Thomas Jones, a relation of the above, was also a deacon of this church, and may be said to rank in the first grade. From the day he professed godliness, until his death, he appears to have devoted his whole soul to his master's service. It is not likely, that any private character ever did more good in so short a time. Though in affluent circumstances, he knew how to use this world as not abusing it. After a lingering illness, he also fell asleep anno. 1805.—He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. Here we must pause and consider, why such men as these, should run so short a course. To which

we can only say, that all who understand much of the ways of Providence, have plainly discovered, that a high degree of prosperity, is seldom of long duration. Things were too well in Bethel church, to abide long, in such a world as this.

BURRUS'S.

This church is in the South West part of Caroline, having some members also in Hanover. It could be wished, that as favourable things could be said of this, as of the foregoing church. But candour compels us to state, that although they have some worthy and valuable members, there have been a more than common proportion of apostacies and fallings off. So much had the church declined at one time, that the pastor had serious thoughts of proposing to them, to dissolve their constitution, or rather, to blend theirs with the Bethel. But God, who loves to surprise us, with unexpected mercies, proclaimed a jubilee. This work of grace began Summer 1808, and in a few months, some very valuable members were annexed. This church was first called Pole-cat, and the meeting house Burrus's, after Rev. John Burrus, who was once a preacher among them, but never was ordained.

Of elder Andrew Broaddus, pastor of this church, much may be truly said. The next association that was holden after he took the ministerial care of the church, entered upon their record the following eulogy. "In the midst of affliction, we have to mention with thankfulness, to the great head of Zion; that elder A. Broaddus, who has been a shining light in the churches these several years past, has, at the call of Burrus's, consented to take the pastoral care of that church, and is consequently a member of our association."

WILLIAMS'S.

This church, chiefly in the upper end of Goochland, is a church of long and high-standing, in religious so-

ciety. For several years, they were under the stated ministerial care of elder John Waller. When he resigned, some little time previous to his removal, they called Mr. Goodloe, who accepted the call, and accordingly preached for them statedly, until the year '96, after which, Mr. John Poindexter, at their request, attended them occasionally. Under Mr. Poindexter's ministry, they enjoyed a pleasant revival: A revival conducted with harmony, solemnity and order, in which, about ninety or one hundred were baptized: of these, says their manuscript furnished us, only 14 have been excommunicated, in about ten or eleven years, and yet their discipline has been regular. A few years ago, Mr. Elisha Purrington, who had previously been ordained, was chosen as pastor. Under him, as pastor, there has been peace and happiness in the church. The church is much attached to Mr. Purrington, as a man of unaffected piety, and mild and pleasant manners. As a preacher he is sound in doctrine, very lively and affectionate in his address, and has talents of that sort, which is calculated to do good. He is a native of New-England, and came to Virginia in the character of a teacher of Psalmody or church-music, in which he is excelled by none and equalled by few, in the state. Since he has been pastor, there have been frequent additions to the church, but no revival.

In this church, lives Thomas Waford, an old and faithful disciple of Christ, who was among the first to profess religion, at the rise of the Baptists. He is not a preacher, but has done more good, than a score of preachers of a certain description. When Waller and others used to travel off, into strange places, Mr. Waford used to go on sometime before-hand, and publish their meetings, and procure places for them to preach at; then he would return, and accompany them: he would enforce, by private arguments and admonitions, what the preachers advanced from the pulpit. He also shared in their persecutions. Once

he was taken up with them in Essex county, and carried before a magistrate and examined, and his saddlebags searched, and then discharged, not having disturbed the peace, by preaching, &c. At another meeting, when persecution ran high, he went to the spring to drink, and there, meeting with one of the sons of Belial, was severely whipped; the scars of which, he will doubtless carry to his grave. Mr. Waford is now (1809,) more than four-score years of age, and has professed religion more than forty years, during which time, he has maintained a spotless reputation, not only for order and piety, but for steady and unabating zeal. Old as he is, he misses very few associations.

LICKING HOLE.

This church, in the upper end of Goochland, is probably the largest church in the Goshen association. It was planted under the ministry of elder Ford and others.—(See page 12.) For several years after the constitution, elder Ford was their occasional pastor, but at length, they made choice of Rev. Hugh French for their pastor. Under his care, they enjoyed peace and harmony. Until '98, they were connected with the Dover association; but being more convenient to the Goshen, they petitioned and obtained a dismission to join the Goshen, where they have been ever since. In 1804, they enjoyed one of the most heavenly revivals, that ever was seen, 4 or 500 were baptized, and among them some very respectable characters indeed. Elder Leonard Page, who was very active and useful in the revival, has been since chosen pastor. There are few, if any members in the state, that possess a greater number of intelligent men, than Licking Hole. Besides their pastor, Doctor John Morgan, a practitioner of physic, and a preacher of the gospel, resides among them.

Here also died, that amiable and beloved servant of Christ, Peregrine G. Smith. Mr. Smith was a native of Massachusetts, and at an early period in life,

professed vital religion. Having received a classical education, he began to preach the gospel. After continuing a short time in New-England, he was advised to travel into the Southern states for his health, which was now very low. He came to Virginia and after travelling thro' various parts of the state, and finding it, as he thought, more congenial with his constitution, he resolved to settle here. His residence and ministrations were much wished in many places. He however gave the preference to Licking Hole, and accordingly came here to live. Mr. Smith, it appears, had for several years been afflicted with the consumption, a complaint so flattering in its nature, that few who have it, ever think they have. He entertained some expectation of recovery, until a few days before his death, which took place in 1807.

Mr. Smith was a preacher of fine talents indeed. His delivery was easy; his style very elegant, his action becoming and his manner warm and animating. His knowledge of books was considerable, and having travelled very extensively for one of his age, he had also acquired considerable experience of men, &c. By these things, added to his mild disposition, his pious spirit and accomplished manners; his company and conversation, was very attracting, to all, who had even a slight acquaintance with him. Licking Hole church, did themselves much credit, by their benevolent conduct towards this amiable and affected widow and child. So friendly were they towards her, that when she passed through Richmond, on her way to New-England, she said to a friend, that "she had not believed there were such people in the world, as she had found in this neighbourhood."

Elder French, though not a man of distinguished talents, was esteemed a warm and experimental preacher. As a christian, he was pious and exemplary. And as a man, he was in high estimation in all the relations of social life. He only lived a few years after he joined the Goshen association, and at one of

the sessions he was made moderator. At the next association, his death is entered upon their records, with some commendatory remarks upon his character.

THOMPSON'S, OR GOLDMINE.

The preaching of the Rev. David Thomas, in Orange, made serious impressions upon some in this neighbourhood, who went there to hear him. This induced them to look out for preachers to come into their own vicinity, and accordingly they procured the services of Mr. Nathaniel Saunders, and others. Finally, when Messrs. Harriſs and Read came on in their circuit, this neighbourhood participated in the blessing.—Some were baptized. This induced Lewis Craig and other young preachers, to visit them; so that in '70, they were constituted as a church. They were much straitened to choose a pastor, being divided among three. At length they agreed to receive David Thompson. The church had now become large. Under Mr. Thompson's care the church declined, and fell into some unhappy contentions. He finally moved off, and the church obtained the stated attendance of Rev. Mr. Leland. Mr. Leland's ministry was greatly blessed. The church increased to a great extent. Few preachers were ever more popular in any place of their stated ministry, than Mr. Leland was in these parts. But much to the regret of both those without and within the church, Mr. Leland in '9, removed to New-England, his native country. This church then made choice of George Morris, one of their own members, who had been for some time preaching among them. The event of this choice may be seen in the account given of the Goshen association. Morris in the division of the church, gaining a majority, held on upon their meeting house. The minority, who was by the association, pronounced the church, built them a stage, and finally a meeting house, a few miles off, where, under the ministry of visiting preachers, in 1804 and 1805, they were revived, and have flourish-

ed greatly. Many of Morris's friends have left him, and joined this church, who called themselves Goldmine church. In 1807, they chose elder William Waller as pastor, who continues to attend them once a month.

ROUNDABOUT.

This church, somewhat above the court-house, and on the south side of Louisa, is a church of the first grade as to intelligent members and regularity in discipline. The gospel was first brought into this neighbourhood by several of the old preachers, particularly Mr. John Waller. In '91, Mr. Poindexter, who had been baptized a small time before, began to preach. In '92, he was chosen as pastor. As if God would clearly sanction the appointment, he granted a powerful revival of religion, soon after he was called to the pastoral care. More than one hundred were baptized in the course of a few months. This work went on, until they increased to more than three hundred. The revival began about Roundabout, but spread upwards. So that in '95, a church was constituted about Foster's creek, called Siloam.—This church was raised chiefly under the ministry of Mr. Poindexter, and was an arm of Roundabout, until constituted. He was chosen their stated preacher, or occasional pastor. It was, when constituted, a considerable church, having nineteen or twenty white males, and about thirty females, besides a great number of blacks. They continued to prosper, until George Morris stirred up his schism in some of the neighbouring churches. Having a brother, a member here, he was too successful in forming a party in Siloam also. This brought on great distress, until they came to a determination in 1802, to dissolve their constitution, and rejoin the Roundabout. This measure also seemed to meet the divine approbation. For immediately after their dissolution, a small, but comfortable revival took place, and about twenty were added

to the church. Elder Poindexter had also extended his labours as far as Albemarle, and formed a church called Bethel, consisting of upwards of one hundred members. It being too far for Mr. Poindexter to attend them, they chose Mr. Robert Jones, a young preacher, who sometime afterwards moved away, and Hephzibah church being constituted a little distance above, Bethel was dissolved, some of the members joining the new constitution, and some falling back into Roundabout. Thus these three churches were again united into one. No revival has appeared in the Roundabout of late years. They are, however, in peace and harmony among themselves. Mr. Poindexter, their pastor, is clerk of the court of Louisa, and a man of high standing both in civil and religious matters. He has made, and is still making great pecuniary sacrifices for religion.

SCARROTT'S.

This church, though not large, is of good standing. Nothing uncommon has occurred among them.— They have moved on smoothly for many years, under the stated ministry of elder Henry Goodloe. Early after their constitution, Mr. Wm. Dawson was their pastor, but he did not continue long among them. Mr. Goodloe then became, and has continued ever since, to be their preacher.

LITTLE RIVER.

Although this church has not lengthened her cords to as great extent as some others, she has passed thro' very few afflicting scenes, having generally enjoyed a considerable share of peace under her worthy and zealous pastor.

NORTH FORK OF PAMUNKEY.

This is a large church, but has been, much larger, having of late passed through not only cold, but very afflicting times. Some of the old baptist preachers

laboured in these parts at an early period of the rise of the Baptists. Mr Aaron Bledsoe was among their first profelytes, having been previously a dissipated character. So soon as he believed himself to be a convert, he began to persuade others. His zeal was unabating, he missed no opportunity to exhort, advise, and admonish, any, and every man he met with. He was really, in season and out of season. Having a singular degree of boldness, he would not be abashed. Great men, little men, rich men, or poor men were all equal with him, as it respected his confidence. He was never to be swerved from his point, nor put to the blush. By his unwearied zeal though far from being a man of knowledge or gifts, he made serious impressions upon many. A church was constituted, and he chosen their pastor. The discipline of the church was by no means regular. No decision could be had without an unanimity. This often clogged them, often discouraged them. But the zeal and forwardness of the pastor surmounted many of these obstructions. The church increased. In '88, they experienced an extensive revival; several hundreds were baptized. So that in '92, when they became a part of Goshen association, they had about 350 members.

Anno. 1806, Mr. Bledsoe was accused of fraudulent dealings which he denied, tho' too plainly proven. The church excluded him, although there was a large minority in his favour, who thought him innocent. No man probably ever felt more chagrine at being excluded than Mr. Bledsoe. He soon moved away, out of the state, and is since dead. Many good men doubted whether Mr. Bledsoe ever designed any thing improper.

TABLE OF ALBEMARLE ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Albemarle, | 1767 | | 78 | Wm. Woods. | Wm. Woode. | J. Watts. | Albemarle |
| Totier, | 1775 | 35 | 120 | D. Tinsley. D. Patterson. | M. Dawson. Geo. Eaves. | M. Dawson. | Albemarle |
| Prithis creek, | 1784 | 24 | 190 | Geo. Eaves. | H. Goss | M. Dawson. | Albemarle |
| Hepbzibah, | 1802 | 12 | 49 | M'n Dawson | M. Dawson. | M. Dawson. | Do. |
| Whitefides, | 1728 | 25 | | B. Burgher. | B. Burgher. | B. Burgher. | Do. |
| Buffaloe, | | | 120 | M. Dawson. | B. Coleman. | J. Young. | Amherst |
| Ebenezer, | 1773 | | 80 | O. Flowers. | O. Flowers. | V. Dun'an. | Amherst |
| Lile's, | 1798 | 20 | 144 | E. Crain, & D. Thomson. | P. Webber. | Wm. Basket. | Fluvanna |
| Fork, | 1774 | 60 | 150 | | | G. Anderson. | Fluvanna |

CHAPTER XV.

*History of the Albemarle Association, including the
Sketches of Churches.*

By reference to chapter XIII it will be found that the Orange Association was in 1791 divided into three districts, of which, one was called Albemarle. This, was then, and is now, much the smallest of the three, having never had more than nine churches.—They held their first session in 1792 and have continued to meet from year to year ever since. We have not been able to procure a full file of their minutes, but from such as we have seen, it appears, that their business is conducted in associations, with the utmost harmony and love. Elder Martin Dawson has generally discharged the duty of moderator, and Elder Benjamin Burgher of clerk. The district included the churches in Amherst, Albemarle and Fluvanna only.* Having given pretty full accounts of the pro-

* Nelson has been stricken off from Amherst since our documents came to hand.

ceedings of several associations where the minutes were in our possession, it is the less necessary to enter into a detail of others : Seeing the proceedings of one association are considerably similar to those of all the rest in the same connexion. We shall therefore proceed to give historical sketches of the churches in this association, beginning with

ALBEMARLE.

This is the oldest church in this association. It was once under the pastoral care of William Woods, who is still a member. Mr. Woods resigned the care of the church, together with his credentials, in order to take off the disqualification from representing the county as a Delegate in the General Assembly. If he were called of God to this work, it is hard to say how Mr. Woods will, in the last day, render an account of his stewardship. He is esteemed a useful and respectable man. Mr. Watts now labours for them as pastor and is profitable in the ministry.

TOTIER.

This church was planted by the labours of Rev'd. David Tinsley and watered by those of Rev'd B. Burgher, Wm. Woods and David Patterson: Tinsley preached in the bounds about 1770, but was not very successful. About '73, Mr. Patterson, who was a resident of Buckingham, preached with much power, and baptized many in the neighborhood of Totier, who were considered as members of the church in Buckingham, of which, Mr. Patterson was pastor. In 1774, Rev'd, Martin Dawson was baptized and soon began to preach: When the church was constituted he took the pastoral care and has continued ever since. Under his ministry the church has enjoyed great prosperity and peace, and has been favored with several precious revivals. Many of the members have, at different times emigrated to the western

country, so that the church has been more numerous than it is at present. Mr. Dawson, their pastor, is now (1809) about 65 years of age. He has always maintained a respectable standing both in civil and religious society. He has been Moderator to the association for many years, a place which he fills with considerable propriety.

PRETHIS CREEK

Church, was, for many years, under the care of Rev'd George Eave, who left them and went to Kentucky. During his continuance among them, there was no extraordinary revival, but, in 1803, coming from the western country, on a visit, the power of God revived in this church, under his temporary labours, and while he staid. there were added to the church upwards of 100. Elders Jones and Goss preached for them statedly for some time.

HEPHZIBAH.

This church, for 2 or 3 years after her constitution seemed to decline, but in 1805 a small revival was granted, when about 25 were added. Since that time they have been in peace and harmony under the stated ministry of Elder Dawson. Mr. Thomas Henderson, the clerk of the church, also exhorts and preaches at times.

WHITESIDES,

has been a prosperous church. Her pastor, Mr. B. Burgher, was in the ministry among the first that are now living, and is esteemed a sound and able preacher, especially when he feels what is called the liberty of preaching. He used to be more laborious in the ministry, than at present, having been for many years, very corpulent, travelling and preaching is no

so practicable. Mr. Burgher has some poetical genius, having composed several songs and other small pieces of poetry. He has been clerk of the association for many years and has composed most of their circular letters. The church has been generally happy under his ministrations, and has been favored with several comfortable revivals.

BUFFALOE

Church, is now prosperous and happy, but for some time, after her constitution, there was considerable confusion, through the misconduct of Benjamin Coleman their first pastor. In 1799, elder John Young, who had moved from Caroline, settled in the bounds of this church, and became their pastor; the ensuing year, viz: 1800. In 1803 God smiled, and as many as 80 or 90 sinners were enticed to Jesus. Mr. William Duncan, a preacher of useful gifts, is a member of this church and has been ordained to the ministry.

EBENEZER

Church, was under the pastoral care of Elder Orsun Flowers until 1805, when he was drawn into the vortex of the baptist preachers, Kentucky.* Since his removal, they have been attended by Elder Duncan. They had a revival in 1804.

LILE'S

Church, was planted by the united labours of Elijah Craig and David Thomson. These preachers were induced to visit this place, in consequence of 3 or 4 persons in the neighborhood going in the year 1769, some distance off, to hear preaching, and being thereby awakened, they invited the preachers to come

* It is questionable with some, whether half the Baptist preachers who have been raised in Virginia have not emigrated to the western country.

and visit them. They did so. Their labour was not in vain. A few were admitted to divine favor and were baptized. Among these was their present pastor, Mr. Basket. As soon as God wrought in them, they began to work for God, and held private meetings; the work progressed and a church was constituted. Their first pastor was Philip Webber, who, moving to Kentucky, the care of the church devolved upon Elder Basket. In '88 the master of assemblies paid them a visit and introduced considerable members into his divine favour. It is a peaceable and prosperous church.

FORK,

In Fluvanna, was constituted off from Lile's. They were at first tolerably prosperous, but through the misconduct of their minister, they fell into great confusion, so far as to require the interposition of the association, in order to regulate them. But perhaps, ere this, Jesus has spoken the storm into a calm.

HISTORY OF THE TABLE OF CULPEPPER ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---|--|--------------------------|---|
| Bethel, Thompson's gap, | 1803 1787 | 72 | 62 95 | W. Macon. J. Koones. | W. Macon. J. Koones. | W. Macon, W. Fristoe. | Culpeper do |
| Crooked run, | 1772 | 30 | 85 | S. Harris, J. Read, E. Craig. | J. Garnett. | J. Garnett. | do |
| Mountpo- ney, | 1774 | 47 | 247 | D. Thomas. N. Saunders, | N. Saunders. G. Eve, | W. Macon. L. Conner. | do do |
| F. T. | 1778 | 20 | 100 | G. Eve, W. Macon. | W. Macon. | | |
| Gourdvine, | 1791 | | | J. Picket, W. Macon. | J. Picket. | W. Macon. | do |
| Fiery run, | 1771 | 27 | 47 | J. Picket, J. Johnson | J. Picket. | none. | do |
| Battle run, | 1773 | | 87 | J. Picket. | J. Picket. | none. | do |
| Rappadan, | 1773 | 37 | 114 | E. Craig & J. Waller, S. Harris & J. Read. | G. Eve, J. Leather. | none. | Madison. |
| Robinson river, | 1790 | 76 | 41 | W. Macon. | W. Macon. | W. Macon. | do |
| Bluerun, | 1769 | | 100 | S. Harris, J. Read. | E. Craig, G. Eve, H. Gofs. | R. Jones. | Orange. |
| Carter's run, | 1768 | 37 | 68 | J. Picket. | J. Picket. | none. | Fauquier |
| Goose creek | 1799 | 30 | 60 | J. Picket, | J. Picket. | J. Koones. | Fauquier |
| Mill creek, | 1772 | 70 | 73 | J. Picket, J. Koones. | J. Koones. | J. Koones. | & Culpe- per. |
| Smith's creek, | 1774 | | 48 | J. Ireland, A. Moffet, J. Koones. | A. Moffet. | A. Moffet. | Shenan- doah. |
| Lostriver, | 1784 | | 21 | A. Moffet, J. Redding, J. Koones. | A. Moffet. | J. Koones &c | Shenan- doah and Rocking- ham. |
| Lunie's creek, | 1777 | 15 | 11 | J. Redding, J. Taylor. | J. Redding & J Koones. | none. | Hardy. do |
| Lynvil's creek, | 1756 | 11 | 19 | J. Alderfon, &c. | J. Alderfon, sen. jun. J. Redding, J. Johnson. | J. Koones | Rocking- ham. |

CHAPTER XVI.

History of the Culpeper Association, including the Sketches of the Churches.

For the origin, &c. of the Culpeper Association, see page 139

Their first session was holden at Smith's Creek meeting house, commencing on the 4th Friday in October, 1792. This session was occupied in organizing.

They met a second time at Thornton's gap, on Friday the 4th of October, 1793 and continued together three days. Letters from 14 churches were received, stating their whole number to be 1212. Rev. George Eve was chosen moderator, and Rev. Lewis Conner, clerk. Nothing more than local matters was transacted at this session. The limits of our work will not admit of lengthy details of the proceedings of each association in the state, nor indeed can it be desirable, seeing the proceedings of one association are so similar to those of another, that by passing over the records of four or five of the largest and oldest, and selecting such general matter as may have called their attention, we obtain every thing, or nearly every thing, worth regarding in any. A few general observations therefore, as to the proceedings of the Culpeper association, will, we presume, be satisfactory; especially as a pretty full attention has been paid to the history of the churches in this association.

Elder Lewis Conner acted as clerk of the association from their first organization until a few years past. At present Mr. Richard I Tutt discharges the duties of that office. Mr. George Eve generally acted as moderator during his continuance in the state; of late years elders Mason and Conner, sometimes the one and sometimes the other, have filled the mo-

derator's chair. Their course has been even and smooth ; their business managed prudently and peaceably ; their number of churches has increased, but their number of members rather decreased, owing chiefly to the great number of removals to the western country. This association has never as yet joined the general meeting of correspondence, but it is hoped, when the principles and utility of that meeting is better understood, that not only this, but all the associations in the state, will become members. Upon this short view of the association, we shall now proceed to speak of the churches, beginning with Bethel.

UPPER GOOSE CREEK and BETHEL

Are churches of happy standing, but nothing has occurred among them necessary to be noticed here. Brother Koones attends Upper Goose Creek with much success,

THORNTON's GAP and FIERY RUN,

Have furnished no historical account.

CROOKED RUN.

This is a daughter of Bluerun and was, for about two years, under the care of E. Craig, was pastor of Bluerun. God having raised up ministers among them, viz. Elders J. Garnett and Thomas Ammon, the latter of whom was once imprisoned in Culpeper jail, for preaching. Mr. Garnett was ordained as pastor. Under the ministerial care of this amiable man, the church has enjoyed peace and harmony. In 1788 & 1789, they had a glorious revival ; 115 were added. In 1802 they were again blessed, and about 30 were baptized. By emigration, &c. their number is not so great as it has been. Mr. John Garnett, one of the minister's, has lately ascended the pulpit, and is said to be a young man of pleasing manners and promising talents.

MOUNTPONEY.

This church was taken off from a church called Mountain-run, in Orange county, constituted in 1768 and since dissolved. The Rev'd. David Thomas was the first Baptist preacher that ever proclaimed the gospel of peace in the counties of Orange and Culpeper, which took place in the year 1763. His preaching was in power and demonstration of the spirit. Mr. Nathaniel Saunders, who afterwards became a preacher, was among the first seals to his ministry. Many others were also baptized about the same time. In 1766, about 2 or 3 years after he was baptized, Mr. Saunders began to preach and in 1768 was ordained to the care of Mountain-run church, which was constituted at the same time. Mr. Saunders held the care of this church until it was dissolved in 1782, and most of the members joined Mountponey.*

Mountponey, as will appear from the table, was constituted 1774. Elder Saunders served them as a supply, from a short time after their constitution, until some time in 1777. When the Rev. John Leland, from New England, came preaching among them, and became a member of Mount Poney Church. The church unanimously called him to the administration of the word and ordinances, without ordination by the imposition of hands, This being contrary to the established rule of the Ketocton Association, and indeed of the Baptists of Virginia generally, when the church sent her delegates to the next association they were rejected. The habits of the Baptists in New England and of those in Virginia, respecting apparel, were also much at variance. Mr. Leland and others, adhered to the customs of New England, each one putting on such apparel as suited his own fancy. This was offensive to some members of the church. The contention on this

* Nathaniel Saunders, though not a preacher of great talents, was sound in the faith. He lived and died in the estimation of all that knew him, a pious and good man. After suffering a great deal, with a long and painful illness, he finished his earthly pilgrimage towards the last of the summer 1803.

account became so sharp, that on the 25th of July 1779, about twelve members dissented from the majority of the church and were of course excluded: The dissenting members formed themselves into a church, and sued for admittance into the next association, and were received. The majority dismissed Mr. Leland in order, and soon after this he submitted to ordination by the imposition of the hands of a presbytery. After Mr. Leland's departure, Mr. Saunders resumed the pastoral care of the church. A reconciliation was effected. Mountain Run being dissolved, Mountponey had three preachers in her government, viz. Elder Wm. Mason, who is now their pastor, and N. Saunders and John Price, all of whom, laboured together in great harmony, until Mr. Price moved to Kentucky. In 1798, the set time to favour Zion having arrived, her gates were crowded with converts. To Mountponey church were added by Baptism, about 200, chiefly through the ministerial labour of Elder Mason. It was about this period that Mr. Mason was chosen by the church as their pastor. Gourdvine and Bethel were constituted off from this church. Mountponey was a member of Ketocton also until 1803, they then joined Culpeper. Mr. Mason, pastor of this church has been long labouring to turn sinners to righteousness, and under God, he has turned many. To say much in favor of a living man has too much the appearance of flattery. We must therefore curtail; but our feelings will not permit us to be entirely silent. Suffice it to say, that in all the relations of life he stands acknowledged through the whole circle of his acquaintances, as one of the most exemplary men living. As a preacher, although he has no claim to learning or refined eloquence, he possesses gifts that are incomparably more valuable. Cowper's description of a Christian preacher is realized in Mr. Mason.

-----“ simple, grave, sincere ;

“ In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,
“ And plain in manner. Decent, solemn, chaste
“ And natural in gesture. Much impressed
“ Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
“ And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
“ May feel it too. Affectionate in look,
“ And tender in address, as well becomes
“ A messenger of Grace to guilty men.”

F. T.

This church is so called from its being contiguous to a place of that name. It was formerly called Ragged Mountain. Through the pious labours of Elders Saunders, Eve, Picket, &c. the gospel was first successfully introduced within the limits of this church. A malignant opposition soon appeared to the word. They threatened the preacher, but God bade them preach on, and so they did, until persecution was silenced. After the constitution of F. T. Geo. Eve was their minister, whose labours were much blessed. Nothing notable however transpired until '88, when W. Mason in consequence of the resignation of Mr. Eve became their minister. 1788 was a year long to be remembered by F. T. A blessed revival appeared in all her borders. The work continued during that and the succeeding year. The heavens seemed to rain righteousness. Many of the votaries of Mammon and of Belial renounced their idols, and gave their hearts to their Redeemer. From this, the Robinson River church was taken off. Benjamin Fuel was raised here, and afterwards moved to North Carolina, where he has been eminently useful, and is clerk of Mayo association.

GOURD-VINE.

This is another of the churches attended by Elder William Mason. The gospel was first introduced into the neighbourhood, through the invitation of sundry persons, to Mr. Picket and others, to come

and preach in their houses. Among others, was a Mr. Sam. Ferguson, a rich man, who had been an opposer, but God conquered him by his grace and in return he made his house, a house of prayer and preaching. The church has prospered moderately with the enjoyment of peace and love.

BATTLE RUN

Is one of the daughters of Carter's Run, and for many years fed upon the heavenly manna dealt out by the Rev. John Picket. Their course has not been very remarkable. Their winters have not been more severe, nor their summers more fruitful, than those in her sister churches.

RAPPADAN.

This is a daughter of Bluerun church. The gospel was first carried into the bounds of this church by Messrs. Harris and Read. The plant which they planted, were watered by Mr. Waller and Mr. E. Craig. When the gospel was first preached in the bounds of this church, persecution ran high. Warrants were issued to apprehend the preachers. E. Craig was taken out of the pulpit, and committed to Culpeper jail. Thomas Maxfield some time after, was imprisoned for exhorting. Mr. Adam Banks, about the same time, was committed to jail for praying in the private house of a Mr. John Delaney, and Delaney himself, who was not a Baptist, for permitting it. Persecution often defeats its own cause. Men cannot be restrained from thinking; and they will think that a bad cause which requires force to support it. In the midst of these violent, and unreasonable persecutions, the cause of God flourished about Rappadan abundantly. In this church, Rev. George Eve, one of the most successful preachers, in those parts, was raised up, and about 1775, was ordained to the care of the church. During the years 1776, '77, '78, they were much reived; as many as 130 or

140 were added, under the ministry of Mr. Eve — By removals, deaths, &c. the church was again considerably reduced, but in 1788, a heavenly work commenced, and went on until '96, when after having been about 21 years under his pastoral care, the church reluctantly gave Mr. Eve a letter of dismissal ; he being about to move to Kentucky. After a space of about eight years in which they were supplied by visiting ministers, Elder Joshua Leather was appointed pastor, but he, after about two years, also went to Kentucky. Since which time, this church, which has been the nursery of several useful ministers, has been without a pastor.

Joseph Early joined the baptists in 1772 and was a member of Rappadan church. He was a distinguished character in his sphere. Though not a preacher, he had his gift, and he did not neglect it. He was rich in this world, and he was willing to communicate. Viewing himself as a steward for God, he laid out his Lord's money according to his instructions. His hands were open to the poor and needy. He was the friend of the friendless. He also bestowed liberall for all religious purposes. When a meeting house was to be built, or any other plan was in agitation, that required money, Mr. Early's purse was easily commanded. His fellow-citizens elected him to represent them in the Legislature, but God had elected him to much higher honours. In 1783, after maintaining, for about eleven years, a most unblamable reputation, for piety and goodness, he died in great peace, going forth to meet the bridegroom, and has doubtless entered with him into the marriage chamber.

ROBINSON RIVER.

Within the bouds of this church, Mr. Mason preached for several years, having singular respect and attention shewn him, by all sorts of people ; but

to his great mortification, he could make no effectual interest, for his master. This was so discouraging to his soul, that he had strong thoughts of turning his attention elsewhere. But an unseen power impelled him to the work, until the set time for God to work : then were their mouths filled with laughter and their tongues with singing. A certain woman on her death bed obtained a hope of eternal life, and when dying requested her friends to get Mr. Mason to preach at her funeral, saying at the same time that it would be a great day. Accordingly at her funeral the revival commenced, and continued until many were turned to righteousness. Mr. Mason has ever since continued his ministrations among them to the satisfaction of all : but through removals, deaths, &c. this church is not now as large as when constituted.

BLUE RUN.

An account of the rise of this church, may be seen in our general history of the rise and progress of the separate Baptists in Virginia. By recurring to that recital, it will be seen, that this was among the first places that the gospel took effect, through the labours of Messrs. Harriſs & Read, and that as early as the 4th of December 1769 this church was constituted under the pastoral care of Elijah Craig.—Her history since that period, remains to be here inserted.

It appears that they prospered under the care of Elder Craig ; many were added to the church, and it was large and prosperous for many years. In 1786 E. Craig removed to Kentucky, and then the church procured the services of Elder George Eve : Who continued to officiate, as minister, until 1794, his ministrations were much, very much bleſſed ; during the years 1788 & 1789, the church was highly favoured. Many precious souls were entituled to fight under the banner of Christ, and in the ranks of Bluerun

church. In 1794 Mr. Eve resigned his care of Bluerun, having to attend two other churches. Elder Hamilton Goss was then called to the pastoral charge of this church. Under his ministry in 1802 they had a small revival. After continuing in the church for 9 or 10 years in love and peace, Mr. Goss removed to Harrison county in the Western part of Virginia; Mr. Robert Jones then a resident of Albermarle, and unordained, was called to the pastoral care; having accepted the call, he was accordingly ordained for that purpose, and removed his residence to Bluerun. He is still their pastor, and has been among them in love and harmony. Their number at present, is 100, but they have been far more numerous, having been reduced by death and frequent removals. It is worthy of notice, that there does not remain, a single member in the church, who was in it, when first constituted.

CARTER'S RUN.

This church was the first fruits of the Rev. John Picket's ministry, and is the mother of most of the neighbouring churches; for, from her, were constituted the following. viz. Mill creek, Battlerun, Hedgeman's River, Fiery-Run and Uppergoose Creek.

Shortly after her constitution until his death, Carter's Run was under the pastoral care of the venerable Mr. John Picket. If any thing remarkable has transpired within their limits it has not been communicated, See farther account in the biography of Mr. Picket.

MILL CREEK.

This also is a mother church, being the first fruits of the labours of several old and faithful fathers in the ministry, in that part of the district. Rev. John Koones was the first, that preached a pure gospel within the limits of Millcreek. Having been bap-

tized in Faquier, December, 1768, and living at the time in Frederick county, near Frontroyal, he began in a few months after his baptism, to exhort and preach in his own neighbourhood. So he continued until November 1770, when he resolved to go up to Shenandoah, into the neighbourhood of Mill Creek, where his brother George lived. It is easy to conjecture that Mr. Koones would hardly visit in a dark and unenlightened place, without making some essay, to spread the favour of the knowledge of Christ. He did blow the gospel trumpet, and it gave no uncertain sound. Many were roused from their sleep, took the alarm, and fled for refuge. Zion's gates were crowded with returning rebels. Soon after Mr. Koones' labours began to be prospered about Millcreek, other preachers visited them. Among them was Lewis Craig, John Picket, &c. Mr. Koones not being ordained. Mr. Lewis Craig baptized the first converts. Among the first that were baptized, was Martin Kaufman, who soon after became a preacher. The work went on, Mr. Koones laboured much. There were in the neighbourhood, many Dutch or Germans, Mr. Koones being a German, could preach in either language, and would often preach twice, to the same congregation, once in Dutch, and once in English. But shall we say, that this work of Godliness progressed to so great an extent, without any opposition? Far from it. Can the lion be ousted from his den, and make no resistance? Can the bear be peaceably robbed of her whelps? Will the strong man armed, give up his palace, and his goods, without a struggle? It is not so. Mr. Koones found and sustained with fortitude no little opposition. At first they were contented to offer reproaches and threats. But as the work increased, they resorted to more harsh treatment. Once Mr. Koones was met on the road and beaten. On another occasion, he attended a meeting towards Smith's creek. When he arrived at

the place, he was met by a set of ruffians, who forbade his preaching. One Capt. Leahorn, a respectable man interfered and insisted he should preach, and prevailed. The persecutors however threw out heavy threats, that, if he ever came that way upon that errand again, they would beat him severely. Mr. K. could not be deterred from coming and they kept their word. He went not long after. His enemies had thrown in money and hired a son of darkness to beat him. Accordingly, as soon as he arrived, the miscreant began to strike him with the but end of a large cane, requiring him to promise never to come there again. This Mr. K. pointedly refused to do. The fellow continued beating, until he had almost disabled him. Then he left him. While thus suffering Mr. K. felt nothing more than a firm determination not to yield: But the savage had left him but a few steps, before he felt his soul exceedingly comforted. He could then thank God, that he was counted worthy, to suffer persecution for the name of Christ.

Some time after this, he and Martin Kaufmun went to a place about 6 or 7 miles from thence, and while they were preparing to preach, he heard a man in a room adjoining that in which he and Mr. Kaufmun were sitting, enquire for John Koones. When he heard the enquiry, he immediately suspected, that some mischief was in agitation, and stepped into a third room and got out of sight. The fellow, who had probably been instigated by some other persons, did not know either Koones or Kaufmun. When he came into the room, he supposed Martin Kaufmun to be John Koones, and without asking any questions, fell upon him with a stick, or something of the kind. It was not until after poor Martin had received many blows, that he could convince the Barbarian, that he was not named Koones. In the mean time the fellow's wrath was satiated and he went off without finding Mr. Koones at all.

On another occasion, he attended an appointment, but before he had begun to preach, they took him off, and said they would carry him to prison. At a small distance from the place, they met a man coming to meeting, he said he had come to hear Mr. K. preach, that they should not carry him any farther, and attempted to rescue him: But the persecutors beat him off. When they had carried him a small distance farther, he said to them, take heed what you do. If I am a man of God, you fight against God. One of the party was immediately alarmed, The warning dropped, was owned of God, working in him, a repentance never to be repented of. They had proceeded but a little way, before the whole company began to relent, and agreed to let him go. The man who first took the alarm, and two or three more of the company, afterwards became Baptists. This was the last violent attack made upon elder Koonen. From the time of his initiation into the ministry, until this day, he has continued faithfully to declare the counsel of God. Among the Baptists there are and have been many active and laborious preachers, whose souls have glowed with seraphic ardour; leaning upon the sacred promises, they were willing to suffer with Christ here, that they might reign with him hereafter: But considering Mr. Koonen's unwearied labours in the ministry, the length of time in which he has been engaged, (about forty years,) considering that he has a constitution that has seldom or never failed him, requiring short and few intervals of rest, it may be fairly stated, that few, if any, in the state have surpassed him, as to the quantum of service devoted to his Lord's vineyard. He has been a labourer indeed, and will, no doubt, receive his full wages, whenever the Lord of the vineyard shall reckon with his servants. Mr. Koonen is still living, and although grown old in service, he does not in any great degree slack his hand.

Mill Creek was a large church when first constituted. Most of the people in the neighborhood, pre-

vious to the preaching of the baptists, were Dutch Menonists. The Kaufmuns and others who were of that sect, being baptized excited great displeasure among the Menonists generally. In order to overturn the works of Satan, as they called it, they sent for preachers from Pennsylvania. In some short time, 4 or 5 Pennsylvania Menonist preachers came. They labored much to prevent the work then going on.— They conceived that John Kooness was the chief cause of this disturbance, and thought if he could be convinced or overset, by any means, there would be no more of it; seeing he could preach in Dutch — To this end the preachers came to his house, and laboured much to convince him. They contended, that Christians ought not to hold with going to war, with slavery or taking legal oaths. That these were fundamental points. To this Mr. Kooness replied, that the Baptists, upon these points, left every man at discretion, wishing all to follow the dictates of his own conscience: He then questioned them, as to the reason of their hope in Christ; whether they had felt the power of godliness in their hearts, or whether they relied upon their nursery faith. He found them entire strangers to vital godliness, denying the existence thereof. They left him, and held meeting in the neighborhood, two days. Striving publicly and privately, against the revival that was then happily progressing.

Their labour was in vain. God still added to his people such as should be saved.

When the church, now called Mill Creek, then Whitehouse, was first constituted, there were two preachers in it, viz: Anderson Moffet and Martin Kaufmun; for Mr. Kooness had not then moved from his residence near Frontroyal. There being two preachers, enquiry was made, which should be chosen as pastor: On this question they were divided, and being customary to have them unanimous, no choice could be made. So the affair stood, until the year 1774 or 5, when Mr. Kooness, having settled among

them, he was ordained to the care of the church. About the same time Smith's Creek was constituted off, partly from the Whitehouse and partly from Lynvil's Creek, and A. Moffet became their pastor.

Martin Kaufmun having been a Menonist previous to his conversion, retained most of their principles, after he became a Babtist. When the American revolutionary war broke out, most of the Baptists, being attached to the principles of the revolution, took the oath of allegiance, and many of them joined the army. This gave great offence to Martin Kaufmun, and ten or twelve others, who had been Menonists.

Some ineffectual attempts were made to satisfy them, in which, it was urged, that inasmuch as they were not hindered in the enjoyment of their own opinions, they ought to leave others in the same enjoyment: That mutual forbearance in all matters of secondary importance was indispensibly necessary to the happiness of society: That in our present imperfect state, perfect coincidence of opinion in all matters, was not to be expected, and that at least, when it was found, that so large a majority of the society, to which they were united, differed from them; they ought to suspect the correctness of their own opinion, so far as to yield the liberty of conscience to others, without pushing matters to extremes. To all these arguments they replied, that to them it appeared, that the points of difference were of primary importance, and that they could not, in good conscience hold fellowship or communion with persons, who allowed such unlawful practices. All attempts to reconcile them failed, and they finally broke off and formed a separate party.—From time to time others fell into their way of thinking, until their number ultimately swelled to 60 or 70. Mr. Kaufmun became their preacher, having been ordained by two of his own members. Their doctrine was not so Calvinistic as that of the Babtists generally. They professed to believe in universal provision, and final perseverance. Their discipline was

nearly the same as that of the Baptists. This party continued to increase moderately for some time, until some other churches were formed, and preachers raised up. Mr. Kaufmun however, was the soul of the party, and when he became old and less capable of active exertion, they declined fast. After his death, which took place in 1805, they dispersed: Some joined the old Mill Creek church and some Smith's Creek. Kaufmun was generally considered a pious and inoffensive man, very zealous and indefatigable. His intellectual powers, however, were very small, and his prejudices strong. He seldom or never adopted harsh terms in his opposition to the Baptists, always manifested considerable affection and friendship towards them, when in their company.—All things considered, it is most rational as well as most charitable, to presume, that Martin was actuated from pure motives, and that he conscientiously believed that he ought to do, what he did.

At an association held for the Orange district, in May, 1709, an entry is made in the following words: A letter came to the association from the Menonist Baptist church, at the Whitehouse, praying for a reconciliation; which church separated from us, in the time of the war, because they would keep no slaves, swear no oaths, nor bear arms in defence of their country. A letter was written by the association, in answer to the one received, and a committee appointed to wait on the church, who reported to the next association, that they attended and found that there was no probability of a reconciliation. Mill Creek church has had many ebbs and flows, but is now in good standing, and about as numerous as when first constituted.

SMITH CREEK.

This church was constituted off from Millcreek formerly, called the White House. The first dawn of divine light in this neighbourhood arose from

a few Baptists who had moved into its limits and adopted the practice of meeting at private houses on Sundays and other convenient seasons, for the purpose of singing and praying and reading the scriptures. By these means, impressions were made upon the minds of many, so as to induce them to go a greater distance to hear preaching, and to invite preachers. They were also favoured with the divine mercy, so far as to have preachers raised up among them; these were Mr. Ireland and Mr. Moffett. The latter of whom took the care of the church about 2 years after her constitution, and has ever since retained it. They have had many revivals and declensions, but none of which were remarkable. Mr. Moffett from the time of his first entry upon the ministry, until this time, has been a steady, pious and useful minister of the gospel. Some years past, by an unfortunate fall from his horse, he got very much crippled, since which time, he has been so lame as not to be able to move about without great inconvenience. He continues nevertheless to labour in the vineyard as far as he is able, and will probably ere long finish his course with joy.

LOST RIVER,

Has not been so large and flourishing as many others. At times, however, there have been some lively stirrs, in which the church would increase considerably, but by frequent removals, deaths, &c. they were again reduced to a small number. At their first constitution they procured the stated ministry of Rev'd. A. Moffett, whose labours were owned of God. After Mr. Moffett left them, they procured the attendance of John Kooness; In a few years Josiah Osburne commenced preaching, but after a little time moved to Greenbrier. Since that time they have obtained the occasional and stated services of elders Moffett, Kooness and Monree, just as they could. At present a promising preacher by the name of Sperry is among them.

LUNIE'S CREEK.

This church was planted by the united labours of elders Joseph Reddin and John Taylor, who, at the time of their coming among them, were young and unordained preachers. By the occasional visits of elder Koones and others, ordained ministers, a sufficient number were baptized to form a church, and they were constituted, under the care of Mr. Reddin, who had now moved within their limits, and was ordained for that purpose. The church greatly flourished under his ministration, until some unpleasant dispute, arising about regulars and separates, Mr. Reddin moved away. The discipline of the church was thrown aside, and of course, every thing fell into confusion. No Baptist preacher preached among them for the space of four years. It fell to the lot of the faithful Mr. Koones to restore order among them. After which, he preached statedly for them. during a considerable time, although he resided about 70 miles from them. A certain Mr. Walker, an excommunicated Baptist, imposed himself upon this church, and was by them imprudently received and ordained among them ; which furnishes additional proof that more caution ought to be used in the ordination of ministers. This church is now destitute of a pastor.

LYNVILLE'S CREEK,

Called at first Smith's and Lynville's Creek, is noticed in our general history of the origin and progress of the regular Baptists. It will appear from what is there stated, that this is among the oldest Baptist churches in Virginia, and that elder John Alderson, sen. was their first pastor. Under his care they went on very happily, having considerably increased, until the fall 1757, when the Indians invaded their country and scattered the church, many of whom moved 40 or 50 miles below the Blue-Ridge. Af-

ter two or three years they rallied again, put their church matters in a regular train, and on the 12th of October, 1762. was received as a member of the Philadelphia association. In the summer of 1763, they were again disturbed by the irruptions of the Indians, but returned again in a short time and continued their church-state peaceably and tolerably; prosperous for many years. In 1775, John Alderson, jr. son of their first pastor, was ordained and took the pastoral care of the church. In 1777 their beloved pastor moved into Greenbrier county, leaving the church destitute of any stated ministry. In consequence of which, discipline was neglected and every thing fell into confusion, and so continued for about ten years. 1787, they gathered the fragments of the church, set things in order, agreed to keep up regular discipline and obtained the stated services of elder Anderson Moffett, a neighboring minister. They now went on smoothly, and frequent additions were made to the church. In 1791 they received as member and pastor Mr. James Johnson, hitherto a licensed preacher in Buckmarsh. The church flourished under his ministry. But to the great loss of the church Mr. Johnson also moved off into Kenawha county, 1794.— Since that time they have had the stated and occasional services of the faithful but aged elder A. Moffett. This has never been a large church, but can boast of several worthy and valuable members.

Silas Hart, a native of Pennsylvania, moved into the bounds of this church and became a member. He died and left by his last will, to the Philadelphia association, property sufficient to yield an annuity of £ 50. to be kept in the hands of trustees and applied to the education of young preachers. The Philadelphia association appointed the Rev'd. David Jones to receive the money in their behalf; but upon application, the executors of Hart refused to pay, upon the ground that the association was not incorporated, and consequently not known in law, or capable

of maintaining an action. David Jones commenced a suit in chancery in Rockingham court, and in 1802 a decree was pronounced in favor of the executors. Jones appealed to the Staunton high court of chancery, when, in 1803, the decree was affirmed; he then appealed to the high court of appeals, where, in 1807 the decree was finally affirmed. Between the time of the decision in the Staunton Chancery court and that in the court of appeals, the Philadelphia association became incorporated. This, taking place subsequent to the commencement of the suit, did not avail as to the suit then depending. The court of appeals however, made a reservation in the decree, stating that nothing done in this suit should affect any other suit which should be hereafter brought by the Baptist association, meeting in ordinary at Philadelphia: So that by resorting to another original action, the association will ultimately receive the money. This is certainly an important case to the Baptists of Virginia. From the decision above mentioned, it would seem doubtful whether any property holden by the Baptists as a religious society is safe. It remains therefore for them hereafter to decide, whether it will be best to suffer their meeting houses and other property to continue thus jeopardized, or to become incorporated. If their becoming incorporated would be a dangerous precedent, leading in any wise to religious oppression, it is better to remain as they are, for it would certainly be more wise to jeopardize property than principles. A fair and unprejudiced investigation of this subject is desirable at this time, and would probably lead to beneficial effects.

HISTORY OF THE TABLE OF THE MIDDLE DISTRICT.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|------------------|---------------|
| Nottoway, | 1769 | 40 | 60 | Harris and Walker. | J. Walker, S. Walton. | | Nottoway |
| Rowhatan | 1771 | 81 | 150 | W. Webber and J. Anthony | D. Tinsley, J. Dupuy, G. Smith, J. Wooldridge. | | Powhatan |
| Muddy-Creek, Skinquarter. | 1774 | 30 | 300 | J. Walker, R. Christian. | | S. Woodfin. | do. |
| Tomma-hawk, | 1778 | 30 | 172 | W. Hickman. | W. Hickman, J. Goode. | C. Forsee. | Chesterfield. |
| | 1777 | 15 | 71 | S. Harris & others. | J. Hatcher, W. Hickman, G. Smith, & J. Rucks. | W. Flournoy. | do. |
| Spring Creek, Chesterfield, | 1790 | 27 | 220 | G. Smith, B. Watkins. | B. Watkins | B. Watkins | do. |
| | 1773 | 20 | 200 | E. Clay. | E. Clay. | E. Clay. | do. |
| Salem, | 1802 | 117 | 156 | E. Clay. | T. Lafon. | T. Lafon. | do. |

CHAPTER XVII.

History of the Middle District Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

When the General Association was divided, the Lower District, on the south side of James River, assumed the name of The Middle District, being between the Upper, which was called Strawberry, and the Portsmouth, which was then a part of the Kehukee. The Middle District included all the churches between the upper boundary of the Kehukee, and the lower boundary of the Strawberry. The exact number of churches cannot be ascertained; as they were not entered in the association minutes in those days.

The Middle District association met in 1784, for the first time, and organized themselves.* Their second session was holden at Rice's meeting house, Prince-Edward county, May 9th, 1785. A general dearth in religion existed, almost throughout the

* The minutes of this session could not be procured.

state. The names of fifteen delegates only, are entered upon the minutes as sent from all the churches.

The business of this session related chiefly to state grievances, all of which are noticed elsewhere.

The association continued to meet twice a year during this cold and wintry state ; but they took up very few subjects except those that respected local matters.

In May, 1787, they met at Nottoway meeting house: the prospects began to be more auspicious ; about four times as many delegates attended the association.— Many churches speak of revivals either already commenced, or ready to break forth. As soon as there was sufficient warmth to put the churches in motion, so as to induce them to send their delegates to the association, it was found that the district was too large to assemble in one body, accordingly when they met at Mossingford, May, 1788, they agreed to divide into two districts, or rather to strike off the upper churches, in order to form a new association, which was called Roanoke. The boundaries were fixed as follow : Beginning where the Kehukee association line crosses the Meherrin river, from thence upward, by Lunenburg court house, to the Double Bridges, from thence to Charlotte courthouse, thence the Lawyer's road to New-London to the upper line dividing Strawberry District, leaving it optional with churches, near the line, to associate in either district, as may suit their convenience.

They held their first session, after the division, at Rice's meeting house, Prince Edward county, where they made some new regulations for the government of the association.

During the different sessions between '88 and '91 nothing of any importance was done. The accounts received from the churches were interesting. It was a time of ingathering of souls.

In May, 1791, they met at Cedar Creek meeting house, in Lunenburg county. Here it appears that

the revivals in some places had subsided, but in others were going on.

The Circular Letter for this session, was a pleasing performance ; it contains these forcible remarks upon ministerial support, “ We fear covetousness and want of reasonable support of the ministry, is one great reason, why we are so languid in vital religion.— When our ministers ought to be out, and working in God’s vineyard, behold they are forced to leave the flock, hungering for the bread of life, while they are struggling to provide necessaries for their families.” When we consider the many pertinent publications upon this subject, as well as, the clear and obvious manner in which it is laid down in the scriptures, it is somewhat astonishing that this duty is still so little attended to. What is man in his best estate !

From this session, until October, 1792, when they met at Appomattox meeting house, the business was altogether local. At the above session, they made an arrangement rather of a singular nature. It was agreed that persons appointed by the association should visit every church in the district, and “ enquire into their state and standing ; to see whether the word and ordinances are duly administered ; discipline kept up ; gifts encouraged and licensed ; a sufficient number of deacons ordained ; pastors supported ; flocks visited from house to house, and their numbers known ; churches destitute of pastors instructed in their duty : small constitutions, not able to live, to be dissolved ; overgrown churches to be constituted for convenience.”

From this, as well as many other proceedings in the different associations, it clearly appears, that the churches are often willing to depute to the associations, a portion of power, as being necessary for the preservation of order and good government, and that when rightly used it is always productive of good effects. It is incumbent on the churches to inhibit them from any abuse of such powers.

From October, 1792, until October, 1797, they met, as usual, twice a year. Complaints of the cold state of religion, during this season, are universal. In 1797, the tone is much changed. At their session at Trayler's in Chesterfield, they say in their circular letter, "How are our joys and sorrows heightened by turns, whilst we hear from some parts that God is magnifying the riches of his grace, in the salvation of sinners, and from others, that no symptoms of revivals appear."

The sessions were as usual, until October, 1800, when they met at Tarwallet meeting house, in Cumberland county. This is said to have been one of the most unpleasant, and indeed confused meetings that the association had ever witnessed. The consequences did not subside for several years, as we shall presently show.

It was at this session that Mr. Conrad Speece (now a Presbyterian preacher) who had been baptized in the course of this year, by elder James Saunders, was introduced as a Baptist preacher, and was found both in the pulpit and in private conference agreeable and clever. He was a man of considerable learning, having been educated for a Presbyterian preacher. By reading some treatise on believers baptism, as 'tis said, he became convinced of the impropriety of infant baptism. After some time, devoted to the study of the subject, he offered himself as a candidate for baptism, and was accordingly baptized, by Mr. Saunders. Soon after this association, he professed to be again convinced of the validity of infant sprinkling, and wrote a letter to Mr. Saunders, to that effect.—He rejoined the Presbyterians, and has since continued with them.

Of his motives it is difficult to judge. By some it was said, that he was disgusted with the turbulent proceedings of the association at this session: By others, that Mr. Speece was much disappointed, on finding that Baptist preachers received little or no compen-

sation for their ministerial services. It is, perhaps, more probable, that he found the general tenor of the manners and customs of the Baptists, quite different from his own and those of his former associates. Finding his temper sowered at the loss of society to which his habits were assimilated, and not able, at once, to accommodate himself to that, into which he had now fallen, he was the more easily persuaded of the truth of principles, which but a few months previously, he had renounced as erroneous and false. It has sometimes been made a question, in private companies, whether it would not have been more wise, on this occasion, to have separated baptism and church membership. There were, at that time, several other eminent Presbyterian preachers, halting between two opinions. It was thought they were perfectly persuaded of the impropriety of infant baptism, and therefore did not, for many years, baptize a single child, but were averse to joining the Baptists, or however, from some cause, did not do it. Now, say some, had one or more of these been baptized, without requiring them to become members of the Baptist church, he could have baptized the rest, and they might have formed a society to themselves, in which the ordinances would have been preserved pure, although their church government and general manners would have been different from the other Baptists. These suggestions were wholly speculative, one thing however, is certain, that when Mr. Speece deserted the Baptists, the scruples of all the others were quickly removed, and they resumed the absurd practice of sprinkling children. Of Speece we must say, we wish, that he had either never submitted to baptism, or that being baptized, he had not again turned away.

After their usual sessions, holden twice a year, in which they only arranged local matters, the association met, May, 1803, at Bethel meeting house, in Chesterfield county. Here they finally settled the confused business arising from the session of 1800.—

At the session of 1800, a censure was voted, against a member of the association, who had been appointed to attend the General Meeting of Correspondence, but who had not attended; alledging for excuse, that he disapproved of the institution. The vote of censure gave great umbrage to the delinquent member. After considerable confusion, the vote of censure was rescinded. This did not prove satisfactory. He complained to the church, of which he was a member, and they remonstrated to the next association. The matter was agitated from session to session, but not effectually settled, until the Bethel meeting. It seems, the church required of the association to make concessions for having maltreated their delegate.— When the thing was taken up at Bethel, the deputies from the churches* made their remonstrances, and the association made concessions. This manifested, on the part of the association, a pacific disposition, which is highly commendable when applied to suitable cases. Whether the censure was unmerited, or the remonstrance just or not, the mode of proceeding was surely highly incorrect. To ask one association to make concessions for the acts of another, is virtually to require of one set of men, to repent for the sins of another, seeing no two associations would probably be composed of the same individuals, and especially at the distance of two or three years from each other. The most that one assembly of representatives, in any case, can properly do towards making reparation for the offences of another, is to rescind their offensive measures. For an association to make direct concessions to an individual or a set of individuals, is too great a prostration of dignity ever to be thought of.

October, 1803, they met at Walker's meeting house in Prince-Edward county.

Here a proposition was made to divide the district.

* Two or three other churches had united in the remonstrance.

In answer to which, it was agreed, to call a convention, consisting of two members from a church, and that an invitation be given to the Roanoke and Portsmouth associations to unite in the convention, so that they might, if agreeable, strike off a part of their churches, in order to make the associations, by this new arrangement, more convenient for all parties. The convention accordingly met, and formed two new associations, leaving to the Middle District, only nine churches.

For further account of this division, see Appomattox association.

The Middle District continued to meet twice a year, until 1807, when they resolved to have only one session in each year.

No business worthy of historical notice has been transacted, since they were thus reduced. They have hitherto refused to become members of the General Meeting of Correspondence.

From the time of the division in 1783, until this time, Rev'd Eleazer Clay has generally acted as moderator; a few sessions excepted. Until Roanoke was stricken off, Rev'd John Williams acted as clerk. From that time until he moved to Kentucky in 1795, Rev'd Simeon Walton acted. Since that period, Rev. Benjamin Watkins has discharged the duties of that office. The continuation of the same clerk, without re-appointment at each session, seems to be a wise and prudent measure. The papers being lodged in his hands, he would feel it more incumbent on him, to be in place, as well as to qualify himself, more expertly, for his office, when he knows there is no uncertainty as to his appointment.

NOTTOWAY.

The first origin of vital religion in this neighborhood, began with a Mr. Samuel Thompson. He was not a preacher, yet willing to do, what he had talents for; he read publicly, to such as would come to hear

him, Whitfield and Davies's sermons. By this means some of his neighbours obtained a hope of eternal life. These new converts hearing that there were persons on Dan river that preached these doctrines, they travelled off to look for them. This took place about 1768. They procured the attendance of Harris and Walker. Their speech and their preaching while among them, was in demonstration of the Spirit and power. A great work broke out in those parts. Inasmuch that the above church was constituted in 1769, and called Nottoway; which may be said to be the mother church of all others, for many miles in circumference. Jeremiah Walker moved from North Carolina and took the pastoral care of them. Few men in so short a time did more good than Walker did, round about Nottoway. Besides his labours in the adjacent neighbourhoods, by which many churches were planted, his success in this church was very extensive. Within about two years from its constitution, they rendered an account of 260 members to the Association, and it was the largest church in Virginia: and two years after that, when several others had been taken off, their number was 196. In 1784, Simeon Walton was chosen pastor; who faithfully discharged the duties of that office, until 1795, when he moved westward. Simeon Walton, Charles Anderson, David Ellington, William Mullins, Robert Foster, and William Ellis were preachers raised in this church. She is now at low ebb.

POWHATAN

Has been long a flourishing church. The gospel was first carried here by elders Webber and Anthony, at that time, very young preachers. They were followed by Waller, the Craigs, and finally by David Tinsley, who agreed to settle among them. The word took a rapid spread; many were added, of whom

several became preachers. Tinsley was very laborious among them until the year 1774, when he was clutched by the iron hand of persecution, and immured in Chesterfield prison. The forlorn state of the church, through his absence, stirred up the spirit of John Dupuy, a member, who commenced first, exhorter, and then preacher; and a few years afterwards, when left by Tinsley, the church chose him for their pastor. Under his ministrations the church was blessed with a revival, in which there were large additions; like many other sister churches, they fell into a declension in the time of the war. Soon after the war, Mr. Dupuy moved to Kentucky. The church then chose Mr. George Smith for their pastor; who was a popular and useful preacher. Under his care they were happy and united. But him they also lost through the fertility of Kentucky soil. He moved in 1804. The next year they chose their present pastor, elder Wooldridge. Of late they have but few additions. Few churches have raised more preachers than the above. Their number is no less than 14, viz. John and James Dupuy, Edward Maxey, George Smith, George Stoval Smith, Lewis Chadoin, B. Watkins, Noah Lacy, Thomas Lafon, Isaac Lookado, Josiah Gayle, John Wooldridge, William Rowsee, and Samuel Roper.

MUDDY CREEK.

The gospel was first carried into this neighbourhood by Jeremiah Walker, Rane Chastain, and others. After meeting with some opposition, it so far prevailed, as to bring about 20 or 30 persons into the liberty of the sons of God. With these materials a church was built. Having no stated pastor, however, they did not go on so well as could be desired. They dwindled, until about 1784 elder Samuel Woodfin, their present pastor, was called to preach for them. Under his ministry they soon revived; and additions were made from time to time, amounting in all to

about 40. They have had small additions at different times, though no remarkable revival. For some time back, they have, like many other churches, suffered a wintry season. Richard Stratton, a pious preacher, was raised here. His race was short. He was arrested by death at an early period.

SKINQUARTER

Is a large, respectable church, of long standing. Elder William Hickman was their first pastor, and was also the father of the church. He served them about 6 years, and then moved to Kentucky. Under his care they enjoyed some prosperous seasons. They also felt the bitterness of some adverse scenes. Mr. Hickman was succeeded in the pastoral office by elder John Goode. In 1785 they were favoured with a revival, which continued about two years. Many persons during that happy season bowed to the divine sceptre. In 1790 they were bereft by death, of their beloved pastor. Mr. George Smith, and other neighbouring ministers attended them statedly. In 1799, elder Charles Forsee, their present pastor, was installed in that office. His labours were blessed during the years '99 and 1800. As many as 70 or 80 were baptized into the church. After this revival, wading through various difficulties, from apostacies and other causes, the church at length settled down in peace and happiness. God again visited them in 1807, with a small revival.

Besides the pastors mentioned, this church is owned as the mother of several other preachers, viz. Josiah Rucks, James Rucks, Walthal Robertson, Edmund Goode, and Williamson H. Pittman. All these are still living, and are all still members of Skinquarter, except Josiah Rucks and Walthal Robertson, who have moved away.

TOMMAHAWK

Has passed through many revolutions as to preachers; but by prudence and caution on the part of the active private members, they have been a very happy people. Elder Jeremiah Hatcher was their first pastor; who serving them about two years, moved to Bedford. They then chose elder William Hickman, who in about three years moved to Kentucky. They were then served by elder George Smith as an occasional pastor for about 15 or 16 years, during which time they had not only calm and peaceable times, but precious revivals. He also resigned about 1791. They then chose Mr. James Rucks, who being ordained, acted as pastor about six years, and declined through sickness. They then chose their present faithful minister. A small and unprosperous church, called Wintercomack, was once a part of the Middle District also, but was dissolved a few years past.

There was also once a flourishing church, called Fine Creek, in Powhatan county. Mr. Maxey was their first pastor. He, though not a great, was a good and useful preacher. In the midst of his course he was arrested by the small pox, and carried to an early grave, in the year 1781. The church declined after his death, until in 1793 they dissolved their constitution, and the greater part, with their pastor, elder Samuel Woodfin, fell into Muddy Creek, where Mr. Woodfin is now pastor.

SPRING CREEK.

This church was planted chiefly by the labours of elder Benjamin Watkins, their present faithful pastor. After getting as many as were thought necessary for a constitution, they were organized 1790. Mr. Watkins pastor.

Few churches have seen more prosperity than this. For some years after their organization there were some added every year. About 1799 some members

feeling impressions to pray for a revival, proposed that stated prayer meetings should be kept up. This was acceded to, and proved very efficacious. Fast days were also observed, and were thought to do much good. The revival commenced, and continued about two years; during which time, more than 200 were baptized. Since that happy period, they have passed through some afflicting scenes; yet out of all, God has, and will, deliver them.

They have another Meeting house besides Spring Creek, called Bethel. Here, it is expected, will be another church at some future day.

The following preachers were sons of Spring Creek. Francis Hancock, Reuben Short, Jordan Martin, and Peter M. Carey. Of these, the two last are still members. Mr. H. is dead, and Short has moved to Patrick, where he is useful.

Mr. Martin is ordained, and travels and preaches considerably. His neighbours say, he preaches also by example.

Mr. B. Watkins, their present pastor, is one of the most indefatigable preachers in Virginia. Though often labouring under severe infirmities of body, with other obstacles, he still halts not at dangers or difficulties. He makes long preaching journeys, in which he every day, and sometimes on nights, proclaims his Master's gospel in its simplicity and power. He is indeed, a wise workman, and diligent labourer. For more than 20 years he has kept a diary; a custom productive of so many benefits, that it is somewhat strange that so few have fallen into it.

Here the two fires from above and below met; Chesterfield was considered as an arm of Nottoway, Dupuy's of Goochland.

CHESTERFIELD.

The first preachers who had the honour of preaching the gospel within the bounds of this church, were William Webber and Jo. Anthony. For this they

were counted worthy of a prison. Their labour was not in vain in the Lord. When they first preached there was not a Baptist in the county. In the course of a few months E. Clay, the pastor of this church, having obtained a hope, was baptized. It seems Mr. Clay had heard the baptist preachers some years before, up in Halifax. He had heard, and was wounded by the two-edged sword; but having come out from among them, his wounds were measurably healed, until about this time, being visited by an acquaintance who had become a baptist, his conversation opened his wounds afresh. In a few months they were effectually and radically cured by the balm of Gilead.

Mr. Clay commenced labourer in the Lord's vineyard soon after his baptism, and has continued therein from that time, faithfully testifying to the truths of the gospel, which he had felt. Being rich he was very attentive to the preachers who were imprisoned in Chesterfield. With some interruptions he has been moderator to each of the associations of which he has been a member. His labours for many years have been confined chiefly within his own and the adjacent congregations. He is now an old man, being 66 years of age; and will doubtless, ere long, receive the fruits of his labour.

SALEM

Was an arm of Chesterfield church. Thomas Lafon, the present pastor, having entered upon the ministry, and being thought to have promising gifts; a church was constituted, and he ordained to the pastoral charge. Under his ministry the church has increased by a comfortable revival, in which 59 were added.

This makes five baptist churches already mentioned in the county of Chesterfield. And most of them large and respectable. It is worthy of remark, that generally the baptist cause has flourished, most exten-

sively where it met with the most severe opposition in the offset. In Chesterfield jail, seven preachers were confined for preaching, viz. William Webber, Joseph Anthony, Augustine Eastin, John Weatherford, John Tanner, Jeremiah Walker, and David Tinsley. Some were whipped by individuals, several fined. They kept up their persecution after other counties had laid it aside. They have now in the county more than 500 in communion. Among whom are four magistrates, two majors, and five captains of militia.

TABLE OF APPAOMTTOX ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Lower Falling, | 1792 | 55 | 65 | Oba. Echols. | | J. Weatherford. | Campbell. |
| Ebenezer, | | | | W. Dotson. | C. Cobb. | Ed. Johns. | do. |
| New Chapel, | | | | Ed. Johns. | Ed. Johns. | Ed. Johns. | do. |
| Staunton River, | 1804 | 50 | 78 | J. Jenkins. | J. Jenkins. | R. Dabbs. | Charlotte. |
| Cubb Creek, | 1771 | 30 | 90 | S. Harris. | J. Weatherford. | S. Todd. | do. |
| Ashcamp, | 1803 | 18 | 60 | H. Lester. | H. Lester. | none. | do. |
| Rocks, | 1772 | 15 | | S. Harris. | | P. Mathews. | P. Edward |
| Appomattox, | 1773 | 12 | 200 | S. Harris & J. Read. | J. M'Leroy | J. Saunders. | do. |
| Sailor Creek, | 1781 | 35 | 280 | J. Walker. | R. Foster. | A. Watkins. | do. |
| Mountain Creek, | 1788 | 12 | | T. Crymes. | T. Crymes & H. Lester | A. Miller. | do. |
| Buckingham, | 1771 | 27 | 290 | C. Clarke. | R. Chastain. | R. Chastain. | Buckingham. |
| Providence, | 1774 | 25 | 50 | S. Harris & J. Read. | D. Patterfon. | none. | do. |
| Wreck Island, | 1784 | 45 | | T. Hargate, | R. Chastain. | W. Flowers. | do. |
| Union, | 1786 | 42 | 120 | R. Chastain. | R. Chastain. | J. L. Abraham. | do. |
| Slate River, | 1805 | 26 | 31 | | | I. Garret. | do. |
| Sandy Creek, | | | 200 | S. Harris & J. Read. | D. Ellington | J. Scurry. | Amelia. |

CHAPTER XVIII.

History of the Appomattox Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

It has already been shown, page 200, that from the Middle District was struck off two new Associations, called Meherrin and Appomattox. By reference to the different tables, the bounds of these associations may be tolerably understood.* Besides the churches contained in the Middle District, several from Roanoke and Portsmouth fell into the new associations.

Of the Appomattox we purpose now to treat.

* We had not the minutes designating the bounds.

Their first meeting after the division was at Walker's Church, in Prince Edward county. Letters and delegates from eleven churches were received * This meeting was chiefly employed in forming a constitution and rules of decorum.

The constitution in one of its articles is rather singular. It declares that the moderator shall not speak to any subject; nor any person be chosen to that office longer than two sessions successively. The design of these restraints, without doubt, was to prevent any from acquiring too much influence. But when we guard against one possible evil, we ought not to be unmindful of another. The office of moderator does not appear, in its nature, to afford presumption that it would be often abused for arbitrary purposes. Therefore, to deprive an Association of the counsel and skill of one of her most intelligent members, to guard against so distant an evil, has the appearance of excessive caution. It is much better to give the power, and watch the use of it.

The next Association was held at Ashcamp church, in Charlotte county, in October, 1805. A query respecting the propriety of admitting unbaptized persons to communion, was introduced at this session. The question was answered by a large majority, that none but persons baptized upon a profession of faith, were proper communicants. The subject of open communion, has been more agitated among the Baptists in this part of Virginia, than in any other; arising, as was supposed, from the high opinion which they entertained of the piety of some other Christian sects, in the adjacent parts. Some respectable Baptists were induced, from this consideration, to think favourably of a mixed communion. It was certainly a very erroneous mode of forming an opinion. If open communion be wrong in itself, it

* It does not appear certainly from the minutes, how many churches were in the association at this time; but it is probable there were thirteen.

cannot be made right, by the practice of men, however exemplary they may be, in other respects.

Their proceedings, from the last mentioned Association until our accounts close, appear to have been prudent and peaceable, but chiefly of a local nature.

The moderator's chair was filled alternately by elders Rane Chaftain and James Saunders. Elder Bernard Todd uniformly acted as clerk.

Having given a brief account of the proceedings of the Association, we shall now proceed to give short sketches of the churches of which she is composed; beginning with

LOWER FALLING.

This has, like many other churches, passed through various scenes. Since Mr. Weathertord has attended them they enjoy better times than formerly. The downfall of Obadiah Echols was very affecting to all the churches to whom he had ever ministered. This church participated in the distress.

EBENEZER.

This church was raised under the labours of William Dotson. Dotson was a man of active zeal, but rather destitute of prudence: he did much good; but he also did much harm. For many years Rev. Charles Cobb was pastor of this church. He had been an elder in a Presbyterian congregation during several years of the early part of his life. It was not until he was advanced in age, that he ascended the desk. This prevented his ever making considerable attainments in ministerial talents. However small his ability in the pulpit, he did much good. His life was exemplary; and a hint from such a man is more convincing than laboured discourses from learned doctors, who neither feel nor practise what they say. After a life of usefulness, Mr. Cobb fell asleep. Since his death, Rev. Edmund Johns attends them stately and usefully.

NEW CHAPEL.

The information respecting this church has been small. It appears however from such accounts as can be gathered, to be a church of not many years' standing. Mr. Johns, their minister, though regular in his duties about home, travels but little to propagate the gospel, and is therefore not extensively known. The church under his care is said to enjoy peace and harmony.

Lower Falling and New Chapel were members of the Roanoke Association from the time of the constitution until 1806. Finding it more convenient, they had themselves dismissed from the Roanoke, and, May 1805, joined the Appomattox.

STAUNTON RIVER.

There had been some few professors of religion in this neighbourhood for many years. But until some little time previous to the constitution of the church, the bulk of the people were unusually immoral and wicked. Rev. John Jenkins commenced stated preacher among them, aided by an invisible hand. They received the word of God which they heard of him, not as the word of man, but as (it is in truth) the word of God. A reformation of manners ensued. Some enlisted under the gospel banners: in 1804 a considerable church was constituted. They procured the stated services of Rev. Richard Dabbs; and under his ministry they continue to be a flourishing church. Some of the members live in Halifax. From the time of her first constitution, until 1807, she was a member of Roanoke; at that time, she was dismissed to join Appomattox.

CUBB CREEK,

Now under the pastoral care of Rev. Bernard Todd, is a church of long standing. Early after the rise of the Baptists, there were some in this neigh-

bourhood who embraced religion. They became sufficiently numerous in 1771, to form an independent church. They were, a few years after the constitution, placed under the care of Micajah Harris, viz. anno 1779. Mr. Harris resigning on account of difference of sentiment, Rev. John Weatherford became their pastor. Under his ministry they prospered moderately. Several respectable and useful men were joined; and among them some preachers. Mr. Todd, their present pastor, is a man of education; and at the time of his becoming a Baptist was a man of high standing in civil society. He had for several years represented the county as a delegate in the assembly; and was among the most active and useful magistrates in the county. But all this he counted as dross, that he might win Christ Jesus, and be found in him. He ascended the pulpit at a late period. He is nevertheless a sound and useful preacher. Under his ministry the church has flourished.

ASH CAMP

Is a young but prosperous church. It was raised under the ministerial labours of Rev. Henry Lester, who was their pastor until 1808. He then moved to the western country. Since which time they have the services of Rev. Richard Dabbs. There are some very respectable characters members of this congregation.

Mr. Lester embraced religion, at a very early period of the rise of the Baptists, and when about 18 years of age. He soon began to preach and was acceptable as a young preacher. Marrying however when quite young, his ministerial labours were somewhat curtailed. He continued still to blow the gospel trumpet, but not to such extent as some who were less entangled with the affairs of this life. He is now (1809) about 57 years of age, of good constitution, &c. In point of talents as a preacher, Mr.

Lester may be considered as occupying a respectable grade.

Rev. Richard Dabbs has been a member of Ashcamp, ever since its constitution. He had been baptized for several years before he began to preach. Since he commenced, few persons have risen into notice as rapidly as he. And at present, in point of popularity as a preacher, certainly none in these parts surpass him, if any can be said to equal him. He is, surely, the most indefatigable of preachers. He travels almost incessantly; and is thought by some of his intimate friends for some years past, to have preached more sermons than there are days in the year. He does not preach in vain. There are seals to his ministry wherever he goes. His talents do not consist in deep investigation or close reasoning; not in full and fair explanations of mysterious texts of scripture, or of abstruse points of divinity. He says clever things, and he says them in a winning manner. Besides, his voice is harmonious, his person agreeable; and his manners, both in and out of the pulpit, affectionate and pleasing. He sings well, and is fond of it. His exhortations are warm and pathetic. With all these advantages, it would not indeed be strange if Mr. Dabbs's talents were somewhat overrated by many. Be that as it may. Unquestionably such gifts as he really possesses, he improves to the greatest possible advantage: and if he should not become biased by excessive popularity, nor be weary in well doing, he will reap a plentiful harvest, in that day.

ROCKS

Is among the oldest churches in this Association. The gospel was first brought here by Samuel Harris, in 1771, who in some short time baptized Robert Jennings a presbyterian, a man of respectable standing, and who was for many years afterwards an ornament in the church. Other preachers watered the

seed sown by Mr. Harris; and about the year 1772, a church was constituted, which fell under the pastoral care of William Johnson. He was succeeded in a few years by one Mr. John M'Leroy, an Irishman, who turned out badly, and then moved to Georgia. In 1790, elder John Weatherford became their pastor, and continued for several years; and he also removed. Of late years they have had elder P. Mathews for pastor.*

APPOMATTOX.

This is an old church. When first constituted, they were cursed with the services of a wretched traitor to the cause. One M'Leroy, a foreigner, having specious talents as a preacher, became their pastor. After some years of confusion and distress, he left them and moved to Georgia, having been previously excommunicated. They then called their present pastor, Rev. James Saunders. Under his ministry, they have been a flourishing people. Of late years, however, they have passed through very lamentable scenes.

SAILOR CREEK

Is a large and respectable church. They have, for many years, been under the ministerial attention of Rev. Abner Watkins. He has grown old in the vineyard, but he has not grown weary. God has been with him here; and doubtless if he is faithful until death, he will receive a crown of life. If the temper of a whole people may be understood from that of a few, few ministers are more beloved by their congregation, than is Mr. Watkins. As a preacher he is considered plain and practical; not aiming to rise very high, nor ever falling very

* This account was taken from an old manuscript of Mr. John Williams. From some circumstances it is doubtful, whether there were not two churches nearly of the same name, one in Charlotte and the other in Prince Edward.

low. In the vicinity of this church was once a church called Liberty, which flourished for some years, and then declining, was dissolved, the members falling chiefly into Sailor Creek.

Robert Foster, the first pastor of Sailor Creek, was brought to the knowledge of the truth under the ministry of Jeremiah Walker, was baptized June 1769, and began to preach the following year. He was not considered a preacher of talents, but was respected as a good man and faithful to his trust.

MOUNTAIN CREEK.

This church was raised through the faithful and indefatigable labours of Rev. Thomas Crymes. He attended them as minister for some time. When he was no longer to be had, they were ministered to by Mr. Lester. Under his ministry they were favoured from above. The church grew. When Mr. Lester removed they obtained the attendance of elder Armistead Miller, who still discharges the duties of that sacred office. About the year 1791 there were, in this church, 78 members: the present number has not been received.

BUCKINGHAM,

A mother church, in the county of the same name, is one of the largest and most flourishing churches in the Appomattox Association. The first successful preacher in these parts, was Christopher Clarke. It was not long before Mr. Chastain, their present pastor, commenced preacher. He has been their pastor, their only one, from the beginning. Surely no people need ask to be more blessed in a pastor. Under him the church has prospered almost uniformly. If they have had their wintry state, from which none are exempt; yet under the prudent management of this venerable pastor, they have not passed through such severe conflicts as some other churches. Mr. Chastain is now an old man, and ripe for the crown

that awaits him. As a preacher he is held in high estimation for soundness, simplicity, and usefulness.

PROVIDENCE

Is not a very prosperous church at present, having been for some years without a pastor. They have but few male members; some of whom, however, are useful men.

David Patterson, their first pastor, was a part of the first fruits of the gospel in these parts. After his conversion he quickly commenced preacher, and was distinguished for his steady zeal and exemplary piety. Being a man of independent property, he received no compensation for his ministerial labours; which by the bye, is very much the case, either voluntarily or involuntarily, with a large proportion of the Baptist preachers in Virginia.

WRECK ISLAND

Has for her minister Rev. William Flowers, a preacher of acceptable gifts. They are a church of good standing, as far as information has been received. The church was first constituted, at a place called Bent Creek, anno 1775, but neglecting discipline they declined until 1784. They were reconstituted at the place called Wreck Island or Rack Island. Mr. Chastain then attended them statedly, and they prospered under his care. He was succeeded by William Johnson, and he by James Saunders, as a visitor. Mr. Flowers, their present pastor, was a labourer in the church for some time before he was appointed pastor. Since his appointment, he has conducted himself so prudently as to leave them no grounds to regret their choice. James Doss was also for many years an ordained preacher in this church.

UNION.

This church, planted by the successful labours of Rev. Rane Chastain, has for some years been under

the pastoral care of Rev. Jacob Abraham. With some afflictions they have also had some favourable seasons. At present they are a united and happy people.

Jacob Levi Abraham, the minister of this church, was a native of the county of King William, and of Jewish parentage. He may be considered as a rare instance of the conversion of a Jew. Mr. Abraham quotes scripture with great readiness, but some think that he shows something of the Jew, still, in his preaching, by leaning more to the old testament in his quotations. Considering that he had but very small opportunities in point of education, he certainly possesses gifts of no inconsiderable grade.

SLATE RIVER

Is a small church in Buckingham county. We have not received any remarkable particulars respecting them. Their pastor, Mr. Isaac Garret, has the reputation of a faithful labourer, who mainly designs the advancement of Zion's prosperity.

SANDY CREEK

Is a large church in Amelia county. They were formerly under the watchful care of David Ellington. After he moved southward they procured the services of Rev. John Scurry. Under his ministry, they have been doing well. Mr. Scurry has the reputation of being an able minister of the new testament. God has hitherto stood by him, and he has only to lean upon his omnipotent arm to the end, when God will not forget his patience of hope. In this church once lived John Pollard, a preacher of very considerable talents. In the early part of his ministry he was very popular, and apparently very useful; but suffering his brains to be addled by some unfortunate

bias, he fell into the doctrine of hell-redemption, or the non-eternity of future punishment. He has since dragged on, rather a nuisance, in the religious world. He was supposed to have been spoiled by being too much caressed.

“ Oh popular applause ! what heart of man
“ Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms.”

TABLE OF THE MEHERRIN ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Sandy Creek | 1785 | 53 | 70 | J. Williams | J. Williams | W. Richards | Charlotte |
| Allen's Creek | 1791 | 77 | 48 | J. Williams & W. Creath | W. Creath | R. Dabbs | Mecklenburg |
| Bluestone | 1772 | 16 | 115 | J. Walker | J. Marshall J. Williams | W. Richards | do |
| Maloane's or Geneto | 1773 | 40 | 39 | J. Walker | J. King | W. Creath | do |
| Wilson's | 1799 | 14 | 54 | W. Creath | W. Creath | W. Creath | do |
| Meherrin | 1771 | 108 | 21 | J. Walker | J. Williams | J. Shelburne | Lunenburg |
| Reedy Creek | 1775 | 36 | 110 | J. Walker | J. Shelburne | J. Shelburne | do |
| Cedar Creek | 1779 | | 55 | J. Walker | S. Jones | none | do |
| Tussockiah | 1777 | 25 | 70 | J. Walker | T. Crymes | W. Ellis | do |
| Flat Rock | 1805 | 59 | 59 | J. Shelburne | J. Shelburne | J. Shelburne | do |
| Cutbanks | 1789 | 19 | 36 | J. Walker | J. Lee | P. Wynn | Dinwiddie |
| Harper's | 1773 | 20 | 30 | & S. Harriſs | P. Wynn | P. Wynn | do |
| James's | | | 26 | | W. Creath | W. Creath | Brunswick |
| Reedy Creek | 1776 | | 57 | Z. Thomson | Z. Thomson | W. Dosſey | do |
| Fountain's Creek | 1787 | | 160 | Z. Thomson | | W. Garner | Greensville |
| Zion | 1806 | 30 | 30 | W. Creath | W. Creath | W. Creath | do |

CHAPTER XIX.

History of the Meherrin Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

This Association was constituted in the year 1804, see page 200. October, 1804, the churches designated to compose the Meherrin Association, assembled by their representatives at Ebenezer meeting house, Mecklenburg county, in a Convention, for the purpose of forming a Constitution and rules of decorum. Twelve churches sent deputies. The constitution which they formed, is somewhat more energetic than is usually avowed by associations. By one article, the association can withdraw from a church which is no

in orderly standing ; which is only a soft word used for exclude or excommunicate. For it unquestionably amounts to the same thing ; as is plain from this circumstance : a church thus ejected or withdrawn from by the association, is not admitted to the communion of the remaining churches. All things then, fairly considered, it cannot be prudently denied but that associations ought to possess the power of inspecting both the principles and practices of churches within their connexion. There is no better proof of the necessity of this power, than the practice of the associations. Most of whom, if not all, have at times found it necessary to resort to this measure, in order to preserve uniformity.

The next session was at Bethel meeting house, in Mecklenburg county, in August, 1805. At this meeting, they agreed to adopt the abstract of principles, set forth by the Roanoke association, some years before. This is, in substance, the same as the Baptist confession of faith. To exhibit something of this sort, as a specimen of their principles, is a proof of wisdom in a religious assembly. To wish to give it the authority of holy writ, or to ascribe to it any thing like infallibility, is the absurdest folly and superstition.

This association has continued to meet and transact business in a prudent and judicious manner, until the present time. Nothing of a general nature, not noticed elsewhere, has been agitated, since the last mentioned session ; except that they have joined the General Meeting of Correspondence. We shall now proceed to treat of the churches ; beginning with

SANDY CREEK.

This is in the lower end of Charlotte, and is a Baptist church of happy standing. They were taken off from the Meherrin, in the fall of 1785. Rev. John Williams being in their bounds, became a member and their pastor. So he continued until his death,

in 1795. After this sorrowful event, Sandy Creek was for a long time without any stated ministry. But (to their praise be it said) they kept up regular meetings, and preserved order and discipline. At most of their meetings, the question which seemed to occupy their attention was: How shall we preserve true religion undefiled amongst us? how shall we advance its interest? It seemed to be the general opinion, that a faithful preacher would be the most likely to effect their object. Accordingly, God directed their attention to elder William Richards, then pastor of Bluestone, and who lived about twelve miles from their meeting house. On the 20th of October, 1798, elder Richards accepted their call; and has been their stated minister ever since. Under his care they have been a lively and thriving church. Spring, 1802, a work of grace commenced, and continued about eighteen months; during which time, about sixty persons were received and baptized. Four preachers have been raised in this church, since elder Richards had the care of them, viz. John Ashworth, who with several private members, moved to the county of Franklin, and there became a separate church, under the name of Pig River; Mr Ashworth, pastor: which church is a member of Strawberry Association: Robert Portwood, who has also moved away; David M'Cargo, and George Petty, who are now ordained preachers, residing in the church.

ALLEN's CREEK.

The gospel was carried here, about 1770; and many persons embraced the truth, under the preaching of Mr. John Williams. They were united and happy, until Mr. Williams, in 1790, moved away. Being left destitute of ministerial instruction, and having a considerable number of black people in their society, of whom there were some preachers of talents; they commenced the administration of

the ordinances, without ordination. They were persecuted by one part of the community, and protected by others, equally respectable. They increased rapidly; so that, in a few years, more than one hundred Blacks were baptized by them. These branched out into different companies, or churches if they may be so called. When Mr. Williams returned to the parts, he had no little difficulty in settling them into order. Many refused to give up their independent state; but the most orderly joined Mr. Williams: and he leaving it to the choice of those who had been baptized by the Blacks, to be rebaptized or not, most chose to be rebaptized. Their affairs went on, not very well, until the year 1790, Mr. William Creath, then a young and active minister, recommenced the peaching of the gospel among the people of this vicinity. God owned his labour. A goodly number were baptized, and constituted into an independent church, 1791. Mr. Creath was unanimously chosen pastor. Which office he accepted and discharged the duties of, for ten or twelve years; when, moving out of the bounds, he resigned his charge. Since which they have had no regular pastor; but at present are supplied with stated preaching by Mr. Richard Dabbs, whose ministrations have been very successful.

BLUESTONE.

It seems that the gospel was first carried into the neighbourhood of Bluestone, by William Murphy and Philip Mulkey, about 1756. Their labours were very successful; and 1758 or 1759, they were sufficiently numerous to exercise the rights of a church. There were several white members, besides a large number of Blacks, belonging chiefly to the large estate of Colonel Bird, in that neighbourhood. Many of these poor slaves became bright and shining christians. The breaking up of Bird's quarters, scattered these Blacks into various parts.

It did not rob them of their religion. It is said, that through their labours in the different neighbourhoods into which they fell, many persons were brought to the knowledge of the truth; and some of them persons of distinction. The remains of this church continued in a dwindled state, until the gospel was preached in the neighbourhood of Meherrin. They then revived; and others being added, and a preacher, Mr. John Marshall, being raised up; they were constituted, December, 1772.

Bluestone was chiefly taken off from Meherrin; but is at present much larger and more flourishing than the mother church. When first constituted, elder John Marshall was installed as pastor, but he leaving them about the year '86 or '87 they obtained the stated attendance of Mr. John Williams, who supplied them until 1794, when elder Richards, their present pastor, moved from North Carolina into their bounds. He was then chosen to go in and out before them, and has so continued to this day. Elder Richards, in his manuscripts furnished us, states that the cold and languid state of this church was cause of great grief to his soul; and that he often sought the Lord for a blessing. Accordingly, in the year 1799 the heavenly work began, and continued for two or three years. More than 100 members were baptized. Although since that time they have mourned under their lean-ness, yet, order and love have mostly prevailed; and not many of their new members have visibly apostatized.

Elder Richards pastor of Bluestone, was a native of Essex county; and of genteel connexions. He professed religion, and was baptized when quite young. His relations being greatly opposed to it, caused him many severe trials at first; but he finally removed their opposition by his correct deportment. When he first commenced preacher, his gifts were rather unpromising. By slow degrees, however, he improved his talents; until he now ranks among

preachers of distinction. All sorts of persons, in his own parts, are fond to attend his ministry. For if there are some persons who do not think him the best of preachers; there are certainly none, but what admit him to be the best of men. He has acted as moderator to the Meherrin Association, for several years; and fills the post with great propriety.

MALOAN's or GENETO.

This church was composed of members partly from Nottoway and partly from Meherrin church. Elder E. Baker was their first pastor; who soon left them, and travelled off. Then elder King took the care. During his residence among them prosperity attended them; but, to their great mortification, he left them; and moved to Henry county. Elder Balaam Izzel then preached for them statedly, until he moved. Since his departure, they have been blessed with the stated ministry of Rev. William Creath. Nothing very remarkable has occurred among them. Their present number is almost the same as when they were first constituted.

WILSON's.

This church was planted by the labour of elder William Creath, while he was pastor of Allen's Creek. At first they were small, but in 1802 God sent them a time of refreshing; when about forty were baptized. Since then, there have been deaths, removals, and exclusions sufficient to counterbalance their additions: so that their number at present is only 54. Although they have not, for some years, been blessed with a revival, yet under the care of their active and laborious pastor, they enjoy peace, love, and good order.

Elder Creath is a man of strong mind, and deep research, in matters of divinity: and was his manner equal to his matter, he would be among the greatest of preachers. He is thought by some to be too fond

of polemic points; so as to lessen his usefulness, by exciting unnecessary prejudices. One thing is certain; that in subjects of dispute, there is a time to speak and a time to be silent: and when we speak unseasonably, and especially if it should be intemperately also; we damage the very cause we profess to espouse. But with this, if this be so; elder Creath is a very useful man. He seems willing to spend and be spent for the honour of his Master.

MEHERRIN.

As early as the year 1757 or 1758, Mr. Dutton Lane; a preacher from Pittsylvania, preached occasionally among the people of this neighbourhood. Some impressions were made; but the leading men in the neighbourhood opposed. Mr. Joseph Williams, a magistrate, charged him before the whole congregation, not to come there to preach again. Mr. Lane mildly replied, that, as there were many other places where he could preach without interruption, he did not know that he should come there again shortly. After wishing peace to the rest of the company, he gravely addressed Mr. Williams, and said, "Little, Sir, as you now think it, my impressions tell me, that you will become a Baptist, a warm espouser of that cause which you now persecute." This prediction came to pass. In about twelve years, Williams embraced religion, was baptized, and became a zealous member and useful deacon in the church that was afterwards formed at that place.

In 1768, the gospel was preached here by S. Harriſs and Jeremiah Walker. The heavenly work was prospered from year to year, until a considerable number were baptized in this vicinity; all of whom were considered as members of Nottingham church, at this time the only constituted church within many miles. Being considered sufficiently

qualified, they were pronounced a separate church, November 27th, 1771, consisting of 108 members: several of whom, afterwards became able ministers of the gospel, viz. John Williams, Elijah Baker, John King, and James Shelburne. Of the two first of these, see Biography. Of elder John King, see the Historical Account of Strawberry Association. Elder James Shelburne is still living in the neighbourhood of this church, and is their occasional pastor. When they were first organized as a church, they received their ministerial instruction from Jeremiah Walker, who attended them statedly, and was then pastor of Nottoway. In December, 1772, John Williams was ordained to the ministry; and he became their pastor. The number of disciples increased greatly; insomuch that as many as five or six other churches were taken off from Meherin, and formed into separate churches; Meherin being the only Baptist church in the counties of Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, and Charlotte. From deaths, removals, &c. this large and prosperous church is now reduced to 21 members: and, indeed, she has been lower than she is at present; her prospects being more auspicious at this time (1808) than they have been for some years. The four preachers, mentioned above, will always stand as monuments of honour to this their mother church. The Baptist cause, has not probably been more advanced by any four preachers in Virginia.

REEDY CREEK,

In Lunenburg, was constituted in June, 1775. Soon after their constitution, they made choice of Mr. James Shelburne as their pastor. He has discharged the duties of that office until this time, being still a diligent and useful preacher of the gospel, though about 70 years of age. They have been favoured with several comfortable revivals of religion;

so that although there have been frequent removals and deaths, their number is still more than 100.

They have four meeting houses within their limits; at each of which there is stated preaching once a month. The following account taken from the venerable Mr. Shelburne himself, as well as from Mr. Richards who was present, is worthy of note. Mr. Shelburne is one of the most religious men living. He seldom talks on any other subject. It is easily conceived then, that whenever Zion languishes, he feels his portion of sacred sorrow, expressed by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. 9th, ver. 1st. It will also be admitted, that of this mourning, the church to whom he stood committed, in the solemn office of pastor, would share her full portion. Such was the case for several years. The state of religion in elder Shelburne's church was truly lamentable. He felt it, and mourned. God heard his groans, and removed his complaints. He is often pleased, however, to take strange ways, (strange to mortals) to effect his purposes. It was deeply impressed upon elder Shelburne's mind, that if he would make a religious feast; or in other words, if he would invite his neighbours generally, to come to his house, and there, for three or four days, entertain them with such as he had; and at the same time, employ every opportunity in exhorting them to repentance, &c. that the Lord would thereby begin a goodly work. He tried it, and succeeded. He first appointed meeting at the meeting house, and from thence invited them, one and all, to his own house. Many went. The time was occupied in the most devout manner. Singing, prayer, exhortation, and conversation were all in their proper season, attended to. The heavenly shower descended. The souls of many were refreshed, and from that time the work went on, to the conversion of great numbers. After this revival declined, and times again became unpleasant, Mr. S. had the same exercises, made the same experiment, and had the in-

describable joy to find, that the same blessed consequences ensued. Some superficial observers will say, "indeed then, this old gentlemen could stir up a revival as easily as make a feast." No; far from it. He never attempted it, in any case, until urged to it, by the Spirit of grace deeply impressing his mind. And when divine wisdom points out the way, it is as easy to accomplish a revival, as it is to bend the knee or open the lips. But all the devices of man are of little avail, unless the hand of God be superadded.

CEDAR CREEK,

First planted by the labours of Rev. Jeremiah Walker, was for many years under the care of Rev. Stephen Jones, a pious, faithful, and useful preacher of God's word.

After having fought a good fight, Mr. Jones finished his course, anno 1806, aged about 63. His death was much regretted by all classes of his acquaintance. Just before he died, he called his family together, and prayed with them and for them, saying, "it was the last time; as he should in a few hours pass over Jordan." Since his death, the church has been destitute of a pastor. It is not so flourishing as it has been.

TUSSEKIAH

Is an old and numerous church. Thomas Crymes was chosen minister at the time of constitution, having been previously engaged in the ministry among them. He was a faithful and diligent servant of God. By saint and sinner he was esteemed a good man. His constant and unremitting labour in the ministry, was supposed to have contributed to the disease of which he died, in the year 1789. He was willing to be spent in his Master's work. Oh! let me live the life and die the death of the righteous.

After the death of Mr. Crymes, the church being destitute of a preacher, resolved notwithstanding, to

keep up the monthly meetings, and when met, to wait upon the Lord, to see whether any would be divinely impressed to exercise any public gift. Leaving to each member to sing, pray, exhort, or preach, as were his impressions. In some short time, William Ellis, a man well reported of for piety and zeal, became a preacher. In May, 1790, he was called to the pastoral care; and has continued ever since. Under his ministration, the church, though not blessed with any important revival, has had frequent additions; and is a prosperous and happy church.

FLAT ROCK

Is a new church. They are the effects of Mr. Shelburne's labours. From present prospects, they are likely to be a united and happy people.

CUTBANKS.

Nothing has been received respecting this church, except what may be learned from the table.

HARPER's.

The gospel was first carried here in its purity and power, by elder Harris, Childs, and Walker; great effects ensued. The hearts of many being wrought upon, produced a great reformation among the people. Finally, in 1773, a church was constituted. They were for some time attended by Mr. Walker. After his downfall, they were destitute, until 1787 Rev. Peter Wynn was ordained to the care of them. They have never been a very numerous church, but have had some useful members. At present, however, through deaths, removals, &c. they are not so flourishing as they have been. Mr. Wynn is still their pastor; a man that fears God, and works righteousness.

JAMES'S

Is a young church; concerning which, nothing worthy of notice can be said. They live in peace and love, one with another.

REEDY CREEK,

In Brunswick County.

This church, together with Fountain's Creek, Geneto, Cutbanks, and Harper's, were members of the Portsmouth Association, until Meherrin Association was constituted. Hence, we may account for the circumstance of there being two churches of the same name in this association.

Reedy Creek was planted by the ministerial labours of Mr. Zachary Thomson; who continued to visit them statedly, for some time. After living many years without any regular pastor, they at length called and obtained the services of elder William Dossy; who is a young man of talents, piety, and very amiable manners. He has hitherto resided, when in the parts, at the house of Mr. Jos. Saunders, clerk of the Meherrin Association. "Mr. Saunders," says the history of the Kehukee Association, with other members of this church, "is remarkable for virtue, piety, and usefulness. He was also clerk of Portsmouth. Since Mr. Dossy has had the care of them, the church has been looking up.

FOUNTAIN'S CREEK,

Is a large church; first planted by the ministry of elder Zachariah Thomson. Mr. William Garner took the care of them at their organization, and has continued ever since. They have had their ebbs and floods; but have generally been a prosperous church. In the year 1802, the bright buds of mercy gathered; and they had a pleasant shower. A considerable number was added. There is an arm of this

church in North Carolina; who assemble at Vaser's Meeting House, Northampton county.

ZION

Is also some of the fruits of Mr. Creath's ministry. Having been very lately constituted, nothing more need be said, than that, they are in peace and harmony among themselves; and bid fair to prosper. Mr. Creath still attends them statedly.

TABLE OF ROANOKE ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---|------------------|--------------|
| Catawba | 1773 | 100 | 60 | S. Harris | J. Hill, N. Hall, W. Dotson | P. Hunt | Halifax |
| Buffaloe | 1776 | | 87 | S. Harris | T. Gilbert, N. Hall, O. Echols, J. Hunt | C. Hubbard | do |
| Mayo | 1774 | 100 | 250 | R. Picket | R. Picket | R. Picket | do |
| Wynn's Creek | 1773 | 35 | 40 | O. Echols | O. Echols, T. Dobson | | do |
| Hunting Creek | 1775 | 8 | 80 | T. Dobson | T. Dobson | T. Dobson | do |
| Mukerfield | 1779 | 13 | 38 | O. Echols | L. Baker | L. Baker | do |
| Childry | 1783 | 30 | 160 | O. Echols | O. Echols, J. Owen | J. Jenkins | do |
| Millstone | 1787 | 35 | 81 | W. Dotson | W. Dotson, S. Braine | J. Jenkins | do |
| Arbour | 1785 | 35 | 81 | W. Dotson | W. Dotson | J. Atkinson | do |
| Polecat | 1790 | 20 | 17 | O. Echols | O. Echols, S. Braine | J. Atkinson | do |
| Miry Creek | 1803 | 40 | 34 | J. Atkinson | C. Lovelace | C. Lovelace | do |
| Liberty | 1802 | 50 | | J. Atkinson | | | do |
| Dan River | 1802 | 60 | 84 | J. Jenkins | C. Lovelace | C. Lovelace | do |
| 12 Corner | 1803 | 25 | 30 | C. Hubbard | C. Hubbard | C. Hubbard | do |
| Moslingford | 1785 | 11 | 196 | J. Williams | J. Williams | R. Dabbs | Charlotte |
| Buffaloe | 1778 | 30 | 90 | J. Read | H. Lester, J. Read, J. Watkins | B. Izzel | Mecklenburg |
| Seneca Mill | 1804 | 60 | 128 | J. Jenkins | N. Lovelace | N. Lovelace | Campbell |
| Church | 1770 | 19 | 103 | J. Creel | J. Creel, T. Burges's, J. Atkinson | E. Dodson | Pittsylvania |
| Upper Banister | 1773 | | 40 | S. Harris | W. Bailey, C. Sarant, R. Elliott | W. Blair | do |
| County Line | 1771 | | 47 | S. Harris | S. Harris, O. Echols, W. Dodson S. Braine, M. Bates | | do |
| Birch Creek | 1787 | 55 | 93 | R. Elliott | R. Elliott | | do |
| Union | 1789 | 35 | 60 | R. Elliott | R. Elliott, J. Tompkins | D. Nowlen | do |
| Bennett's | 1790 | 22 | 67 | J. Kenney | J. Kenney, G. Dickerson | J. Jenkins | do |

TABLE OF ROANOKE ASSOCIATION.
CONCLUDED.

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|----|-----|--------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| White-thorn | 1791 | 80 | 53 | M. Bates | M. Bates | W. Hopwood | Pittsylvania |
| Lower Banister | 1795 | 32 | 277 | J. Jenkins | J. Jenkins | J. Jenkins | do |
| Stinking River | 1800 | 40 | 52 | M. Bates | son | G. Dicker-son | do |
| Shockoe | 1803 | | 60 | J. Jenkins | D. Nowlen | D. Nowlen | do |
| Double-creek | 1803 | 35 | 48 | J. Atkinson | W. Moore | | do |
| Zion Hill | 1807 | 35 | 35 | J. Jenkinson | J. Warner | J. Warner | do |
| Stewart's creek | | | 36 | | R. Elliott | W. Blair | do |

CHAPTER XX.

History of the Proceedings of the Roanoke Association, from her Constitution, until 1807.

It has been already shown, page 195, that Roanoke was stricken off from the Middle District, in May 1788. Their first session was holden, in October, 1788, at Miller's ferry, Dan river, Watkins's meeting house; in which, according to custom, they were chiefly employed in forming a constitution or rules of government. This constitution possesses more energy in some of its provisions, than will be found in the form of government, adopted by most of the associations. It has stood more than twenty years, and under it the association has prospered to an unusual extent; as will be seen hereafter. By this constitution, the association is made the medium to procure suitable presbyteries in the ordination of preachers, and in the constitution of churches; and likewise to obtain seasonable aid in all matters of distress in churches.

They met, for the second time, in May, 1809, at Grassly Creek meeting house, in North Carolina.*

Letters were received from twenty churches; the state of which is described in the following extract from the circular letter. "Excepting a few in-

* After the separation from the Middle District, they were joined by several churches in North Carolina.

stances, we had agreeable accounts from the churches, touching the advancement of Emmanuel's interest. And from some parts, very much so."

The business with which this session was occupied, displays a noble and enterprising spirit; and proves, that if they could have effected their intentions, they would have done much towards advancing the respectability of the Baptist society. But alas! what are the most noble views, without means to accomplish them!

The erection of Baptist seminaries of learning, and the publication of a History of the Baptists in Virginia, were the subjects of the greatest importance to which they attended. For further information, as to their proceedings on each, see the History of the General Committee, and other places.

A copy of the minutes of this association, accompanied by a letter from Rev. John Williams, was sent by him, to Mr. Rippon, London; who published extracts therefrom, in his Annual Register of the Baptists.

October, 1789, they met again, at Catawba meeting house, Halifax county. Letters from twenty eight churches were received. Their tidings were pleasing.

About this time, Henry Pattillo, a Presbyterian preacher of distinction, had preached several times in favour of infant baptism; in which, he had degraded the Baptists in the most scurrilous manner. The Association, in order to rebut his calumny, appointed John Williams to answer him, on a certain day; which day, they determined should be a day of fasting and prayer. Accordingly, Mr. Williams fulfilled the appointment, to the general satisfaction of the Baptists and their friends; and to the annoyance of their enemies. A David can slay a Goliath, when he comes to him in the name of the Lord of hosts.

Their next session was at Whiteoak mountain, Pittsylvania county, June, 1790. Letters from thirty four churches were received, affording no singular intelligence. The business of the Association was not interesting.

October, 1790, they met again, at Picket's meeting house. Letters were received from thirty one churches.

At this association, some debate arose as to the authenticity of the christian sabbath; but was at length unanimously determined in favour of its being observed as a sacred day. This subject has been, not unfrequently, taken up among the Virginia Baptists, both in public and private; and the divine authority of the sabbath day disputed by some. In consequence of such debates, it has been thought that the sabbath has not been as religiously observed, in some places, as duty would require.

An abstract of principles, containing twenty articles, was published by this association. They are substantially the same as the confession of faith.

They met at Dobson's meeting house, Halifax, June, 1791. Letters were received from thirty four churches. They detail nothing singular. It was determined, that in future, the District should be divided into two. The one to be called Dan River Association, and the other to retain the name of Roanoke. It is unnecessary to detail the particulars of this division, seeing after two sessions they determined to reunite.

October, 1791, the Roanoke Association met at Catawba meeting house, Halifax.

April, 1792, they met at Allen's Creek meeting house, Pittsylvania.

October, 1792, they met at Mill meeting house, Pittsylvania. No business worthy of notice was transacted at these sessions.

May, 1793, they met at Grassly Creek meeting house, North Carolina. Letters were received from

twenty seven churches; from which it appeared, that the state of religion was very adverse indeed; only twenty having been baptized from the last association.

October, 1793, they met at Hart's Chapel, North Carolina. Letters from thirty six churches were received; detailing unpleasant tidings, as to the low state of religion.

The following query was introduced and answered, viz. Whether the excommunication of a minister does not make his credentials null and void?

Answered in the affirmative.

This is a subject of general interest. Many evils have been produced, from excommunicated preachers availing themselves of their former credentials: yet, it is difficult to find a remedy.

May, 1794, they met at Bluestone meeting house, Mecklenburg. Letters from twenty six churches were received; the language of which is lamentation. In all, forty four had been baptized. The total number in all the churches, was 3148.

October, 1794, they met at Catawba meeting house, Halifax. Letters from thirty six churches were received. They still lament their languid state.

The only business transacted at this session worthy of notice, was the division of the District. The state line became the boundary between the two districts. The churches in North Carolina were constituted under the name of the Flat River Association. The Roanoke, appointed their next association to be holden at Banister meeting house, Pittsylvania county, on the Saturday before the first Sunday in May, 1795.

Saturday, May 2d, 1795, they met at the appointed place. Letters from twenty five churches were received: all of which bemoan the dark and gloomy state of religion among them. The circular letter to the churches, on this subject, speaks in this wise: "We have read your letters, which give us the doleful tidings of the declension of religion in this district; and also, how few there are added to the bor-

ders of Zion. O brethren! what counsel shall we give you in this distressing situation? We can only say, that the cause must exist among the professors of religion. God has not changed. It must be, therefore, certain that we have changed; and that our transgressions have raised a wall between God and our souls." This letter was composed by Samuel Brame. The whole number of churches now remaining in this district is thirty four. The whole number baptized in the corresponding churches, is eight only. The whole number in all the churches, is two thousand and eighty five.

October, 1795, they met at Reedy Creek meeting house, Halifax.

May, 1796, they met at Sandy Creek meeting house, Charlotte.

October, 1796, they met at Buffaloe meeting house, Mecklenburg.

May, 1797, they met at County Line meeting house, Pittsylvania.

October, 1797, they met at Musterfield meeting house, Halifax.

May, 1798, they met at Buffaloe meeting house, Halifax.

October, 1798, they met at Emmerson's meeting house, Pittsylvania.

May, 1799, they met at Millstone meeting house, Halifax.

October, 1799, they met at Allen's Creek meeting house, Mecklenburg.

May, 1800, they met at Arbour meeting house, Halifax.

October, 1800, they met at Whitethorn meeting house, Pittsylvania.

May, 1801, they met Childry meeting house, Halifax.

October, 1801, they met at Mossingford meeting house, Charlotte.

The business done during this long wintry state,

is not of sufficient importance to command attention, except as to their mode of proceeding respecting the languid state of Zion. An industrious and careful shepherd watches and feeds his flocks in winter, guards them from wolves and dogs, shelters them from storms, cherishes the weak, stays the wandering, separates the contagious, puts out the troublesome, &c. &c. and has them in spring, strong and lively, to bring forth and raise their young. So acted the Roanoke Association towards the churches. As a mother nourisheth her children, so she nourished her people. Her conduct during this period, is worthy of lasting remembrance. Frequent days of fasting and of prayer, were appointed and observed through the churches, to bewail their declension and to strive for a revival. Every circular letter contained some exhortation to the churches to search for the cause, to endeavour to rouse up, from their lethargy. In 1797, they laid off two districts, and appointed two ministers, and two laymen for each, to travel through the churches to examine their state and standing, to stir them up to duty, and to enquire, if there was not some accursed thing in the camp, that caused the frowns of the Lord, upon the armies of Israel. This measure was faithfully executed; and at the next association, the church letters express great approbation of its beneficial effects. In 1798, a query was sent from one of the churches, proposing an examination of the ministers, as to the performance of their duty; and more particularly, as to family worship; suggesting, that to some neglect of this kind, might be ascribed their languid state. The examination was agreed to; and each minister rose up in his place and rehearsed his exercises. Some, with great contrition, acknowledged their neglect, and promised future diligence. It was a solemn season. The proverb, "Like priest like people," though often used in ridicule, is a serious truth. The spirit of the living creature is in the

wheels. Seldom do we see a dull preacher, and a lively church, or, vice versa. Therefore, for the most part, to reform the ministry, is to revive the church. The ministerial examination mentioned above, is said to have made great changes. It operated like Paul's epistle to the delinquent Corinthians. They sorrowed after a godly sort. It wrought in them great carefulness, &c. It was not a great while after this, viz. the middle of the year 1790, that the dawning of one of the bright days of the Son of man appeared. The work, however, was confined to a few churches, until the beginning of the year 1802; when it became general. Fair and refreshing gales are not more welcome to sea-worn sailors, than these breathings of the Holy Spirit were, to the precious sons of Zion in this association. In some churches, the numbers were more than doubled: in some, more than two hundred were added.* In their circular letter, May, 1802, they publish an account of this work, and state, that one thousand three hundred and forty one had already been baptized; and that the work was still going on.

The association for May, 1802, was holden at Buffaloe meeting house, Mecklenburg.

October, 1802, they met at Rieve's meeting house, Pittsylvania.

Notwithstanding the blessed state of the gospel in this district, at this time; they had a severe trial, in the misconduct of a certain James Tompkins; and in the opposition made to the prudent discipline exercised towards him, by a presbytery united to the churches of which he was a member and minister. The presbytery consisted of ministers appointed by the association, at the request of the churches immediately interested. When the presbytery met, the Upper Banister and Stewart's Creek churches uni-

* The churches in this association, are confined within much narrower limits, than in almost any part of Virginia; so that two hundred was a very large number indeed, all things considered.

ted, and with the presbytery formed a council to investigate and decide on Tompkins's conduct. On a fair and impartial trial, they pronounced him guilty of the crimes alledged against him, and excluded him. Tompkins, however, denied the allegation; and, being a man of address, formed a considerable party in his favour, in some of the churches; who very incautiously and prematurely, expressed their disapprobation of the proceedings, in their corresponding letters to this session. To these churches the association sent committees to remonstrate. The churches and individuals who had caused the distress, conceded; and a report to that amount, was made to the next association.

A committee was also appointed, at the request of some of the churches, to attend the churches to which Tompkins had been connected, and to give him a further chance to exonerate himself from the charges laid against him; or of making satisfactory concessions. They met, and reinstated him, with partial concessions on his part. Of his guilt, however, many who were well acquainted with the whole ground, entertained very little doubt. In a little time after his restoration, he professed to be convinced of the truth and propriety of infant baptism; and actually joined the Presbyterians.

Mr. Tompkins did not live long in the enjoyment of his new principles. The scythe of time, that sweeps down, without distinction, the good and the bad; brought him to the dust in a short time.

James Tompkins was a young man of considerable talents; and until suspected of disorderly behaviour, was very popular as a Baptist preacher. It would seem, that his downfall was a species of adversity permitted of God, to be set over against the prosperity of the Baptists in this association. It happened in the height of the revival.

April, 1803, they met at Ebenezer meeting house, Campbell. Letters from twenty seven churches

were received. As far as the state of religion can be conjectured from the minutes, it appears that the revival, as it respects the conversion of sinners, was somewhat on the decline; the harvest being nearly over. But as it respects the state of the churches, it seemed that christians were in the lively exercise of vital piety; a number of young and promising labourers thrust into the vineyard; several new churches constituted; and, with very few exceptions, peace and love reigned throughout Zion's borders.

A minister of considerable talents, misled by ambition, having about this time, set up for a member of congress, created some distress among the brethren. In consequence of which, the following query was offered to this association:

Query. Will the word of God tolerate a minister of the gospel in suing for a post of honour and profit in legislation, and retain the privileges of his ministerial office at the same time.

For reasons unknown, the association never answered the query. We will offer a few reflections. For a real minister of God's word, to become a candidate for a political office, seems to us more absurd, than for a man made prime minister, to sue for the office of constable. Doubtless, in the view of a sound mind, the disparity between the office of prime minister and that of constable, is not so great as between a legitimate stand in the pulpit, and a seat in congress. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's honours above man's.

October, 1803, they met at Meherrin meeting house, Lunenburg. Letters from thirty two churches were received. The state of religion was nearly as described at the last association. No less than nine young preachers had been ordained from the last association; as appears by the return of presbyteries. For some sessions back, there had been some in the association, who advocated a division of the district.

On a fair trial now, it was found, that a large majority were decidedly opposed to it. It was however, agreed, that any churches lying on the extremity might be dismissed, for the purpose of combining with others, appertaining to other associations, to form a new association. By these means, it fell out, that the associations now called Meherrin and Appomattox were established. A committee of seven able and experienced ministers were appointed on Saturday, to examine the amendments made to the confession of faith; who reported on Monday, that they were of opinion that "the amendments and alterations are much for the better." To which the association consented.

May, 1804, they met at Bethel meeting house, North Carolina.* Letters from thirty one churches were received. Religion seems to be not so warm and prosperous as at the last association: yet there were several applications for the constitution of new churches, and for the ordination of young ministers. It was determined that a summary of church discipline should be formed for the advantage of the churches in their government, and then sent by the composer to the churches, for inspection. This summary was finally ratified by the association, and two hundred copies printed. This was certainly a wise and prudent measure; calculated to preserve order and uniformity among the churches.

October, 1804, they met at Stinking River meeting house, Pittsylvania. Letters from twenty eight churches were received. The state of religion nearly as at last session. No business worthy of notice was taken up in this association.

May, 1805, they met at Catawba meeting house, Halifax. Letters from thirty four churches were received. And if any judgment can be formed from

* The meeting house is in North Carolina, but it belongs to Mayo church; the larger part of which is in Virginia.

the ordination of ministers and the constitution of churches; we may venture to pronounce, that the state of religion was by no means very adverse in this district, at this time. The circular letter, however, calls it a sifting time. No other except local matters, commanded the attention of the Association.

October, 1805, they met at Hunting Creek. Letters from thirty churches were received. The Association appointed the Saturday before the first Sunday in December, for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, for an increase of grace, and a revival of God's work. This practice is surely worthy of imitation. In no association have the appointments of fast days and such like means for the promotion of the prosperity of Zion, been oftener resorted to, than in Roanoke District: And it may with safety be said, that within her limits, the Baptist cause has flourished more, than in any section of the state of Virginia; not to say, of the United States. They prayed the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers, and they were sent. They abound in preachers; some of whom are able, and most are useful.

May, 1806, they met at County Line meeting house, Pittsylvania. Letters from twenty nine churches were received. It was resolved, to adopt as a circular letter for this session, a letter of Mr. John Newton, on the doctrine of election and final perseverance. This is certainly an admirable composition. But when we consider the prepossession of most readers, in favour of authors with whom they have personal acquaintance: when we consider the improvement which these annual compositions might afford to some of the sons of genius in the Association; we are of opinion, that it is impolitic to borrow; especially from old and known writings, which they could easily get without printing.

October, 1806, they met at Upper Banister meeting house, Pittsylvania. Letters from eighteen churches were received. Their style is that of complaint on account of the dead state of Zion.

It is stated in the minutes of this session, that in the churches that compose the Roanoke Association, there are twenty five ordained, and five licensed ministers. There are in all twenty nine churches; having on an average more than one preacher for each church. In this session the following query was introduced: Has a minister of the gospel any more power, in the government of a church, than an individual of the laity? Answered in the negative. This decision, must doubtless, carry the principles of free government beyond all scripture example; provided, by ministers of the gospel, pastors of churches are intended. Nothing can be more clear, than that, through the whole tenor of the new testament, they are recognized as having authority of some sort. They are called rulers; and are promised a reward if they rule well. They are called elders; alluding, no doubt, to elders under the Mosaic economy; who surely had authority in the nation. Paul writes to the different churches in the language of authority; and advises Timothy and Titus as ministers, whom he considers as having power. It will then be asked, What kind of authority do they possess? To which it may be answered, They have a power similar to that of fathers: the authority of love. Hence, they are charged by Peter, not to lord it, over God's heritage: not to feel and act, as if they were lords and masters. This sentiment, while it embraces the plain tenor of the word, is by no means repugnant to republican church-government; seeing pastors are chosen by the churches, and cannot, therefore, have any kind of power until given by them. They are, therefore, representatives of the churches, exercising various branches of power, in the name and for the benefit of the church, and for the glory of God. If this were not the case, how could the pastor be responsible for the standing of the church; as is evident, from the addresses to the angels of the seven churches of Asia.

May, 1807, they met at Seneca meeting house, Campbell. Letters from twenty four churches were received. The accounts, as usual of late years, represent the churches as in a wintry state. Nothing except local matters, was attended to in this session.

October, 1807, they met at Millstone meeting house, Halifax. Letters from twenty seven churches were received. No revival. The love of many waxing cold.

Considerable agitation of mind was excited at this session, in consequence of a query, introduced from a church in the county of Charlotte: Whether it was a maxim, firmly established among the Baptists, that "human learning is of no use." This query arose out of an illiberal assertion, contained in a letter from Mr. Rice, a Presbyterian preacher of Charlotte, to the chairman of the committee of missions; and which was published in the Assembly's Missionary Magazine of May, 1807. In which Mr. Rice declares, that, among the Baptists of this neighbourhood, it is a maxim, very firmly established, that human learning is of no use. The Association took up the business, and appointed a committee of certain brethren, to answer and explain the subject. The answer, which was strong and energetic, composed by Mr. Kerr, was printed. No reply, or attempt to establish the assertion, has been made by Mr. Rice, as yet.

It will easily be discovered by a judicious reader, that the administration of this association has been, from the beginning, marked with prudence, moderation, zeal, and piety. And that to her wise and watchful measures, under God, may be ascribed much of the great success, which has attended the Baptist cause within her limits. Her ministers, though not blessed with classic educations; seem well versed in that wisdom which descendeth from above.

At their first constitution, Rev. Samuel Harris acted generally, as moderator. Since his relinquish-

ment and death, Rev. Reuben Picket has commonly filled the moderator's chair. Their first clerk was Rev. John Williams. He was succeeded by Rev. John Atkinson; and since his resignation, Rev. John Jenkins has acted as clerk. These offices have been temporarily filled by others; but the above named were their stated servants. A number of excellent circular letters were found in the minutes of this association. But our limits are becoming too narrow to publish the extracts which we at first intended. And in particular, one annexed to the minutes of 1801, composed by Rev. James Hurt, being an address to young preachers, is so well calculated to do good, that it is with real regret we feel compelled to omit it.*

CHAPTER XXI.

Historical Sketches of the Churches in Roanoke Association.

CATAWBA.

The people of this neighbourhood had the proclamation of peace made to them, soon after the rise of the Baptists in Virginia. Samuel Harris was the first successful preacher. His plants were watered by the succeeding labours of himself and others, until a church was constituted, and James Hill, a preacher, raised up among them. He was inducted as their first pastor; and continued for some years. In 1777, elder Nathaniel Hall became pastor, and continued faithfully to discharge the duties of his office, until 1785; when believing himself to be

* Would not a volume, made up of circular letters judiciously selected, be a pleasing and profitable publication at this time? The compiler would gladly furnish a friend disposed to publish such a volume, materials, to considerable extent now in his possession, from which the selection might be made.

supplanted by William Dotson, a preacher of popular talents, he moved to the state of Georgia; where he lived and died a faithful minister of God's word. He, though a sound preacher, was not a minister of distinguished abilities.

Dotson having insinuated himself into the favour of the congregation, was chosen as Mr. Hall's successor. Being of a restless spirit, after a few years he left them. In 1793, they made choice of their present pastor; who has continued to serve them steadily until this time. Catawba has been a flourishing church from the beginning. They have generally had among them several private members of intelligence, piety, and prudence, that were rich in this world, and willing to communicate; hence they have so frequently had the Association at their meeting house.

Mr. Philip Hurt, their pastor, is a sensible, sound, and solemn preacher: a friend to discipline and order; and has done much good in his day and generation. God has bestowed upon Mr. Hurt, one of the greatest of blessings ever enjoyed by a pious father in this vale of tears. He has the happiness to see his own son living, in the bounds of his church, a pious christian, and an eminent minister of the gospel.

Robert Hurt was one of the first fruits of the great revival. He commenced preacher soon after his conversion; and rose into notice, as a young man of amiable manners, pious life, and very promising talents. Although he lives in the bounds of Catawba, he acts as minister for some of the neighbouring churches.

BUFFALOE

Was also the fruits of the venerable S. Harris. Thomas Gilbert, a preacher of zeal and usefulness, was their first pastor. They had also the ministerial services of Nathaniel Hall, and Obadiah Echols, at different times; but we have not had information

sufficiently distinct to be able to say at what periods these men served them. Their present pastor, elder Clarke Hubbard, is a warm, zealous, and persevering preacher. Although his opportunities for acquiring literary knowledge, were very small, in his early life; yet as soon as he was arrested by divine grace, he devoted his mind to the improvement of his gifts; and his profiting appears to all who know him. Buffalo participated in the revival of 1802, and seventy six were added.

MAYO.

This is one of the largest churches in Roanoke Association; yet has been much larger than it is at present. From the beginning they have been a very respectable people. In 1790, they had one hundred and forty members. At subsequent periods, they increased by small additions; but in 1802, they enjoyed the outpouring of the Spirit in large portions: one hundred and twenty were added: after which, the church had as many as four hundred members: but, by frequent removals, &c. they are now, not so numerous.

They have had but one pastor; and no other can they wish, so long as he is enabled by divine goodness to perform the duties of his office.

Rev. Reuben Picket, their pastor, was born in the year 1752, embraced true religion in the year 1769, and was baptized by Samuel Harris, in Orange county, not far from his place of residence, a few months after his conversion. Although only about eighteen years of age, his mind led him to appear in public, in order to persuade sinners to repentance. Hearing of a great work of God in Shenandoah county, he could not be kept back; but went into the midst of it. There he commenced first exhorter, and then preacher; and soon became very successful in inducing his fellow men to turn to God. He and elder Koonen travelled together; Koonen preached in

Dutch, and he in English : many of each language, through their labours were initiated into divine favour. About this time, Mr. S. Harris coming on a preaching visit through those parts, Mr. Picket felt great desire to travel with him; but knowing he was not rich, and that his embarrassments would be great, unless he followed some calling for a livelihood, he was very unhappy for some length of time. Spreading his case, however, before his invisible instructor, this text came forcibly to his mind: "Go ye, and preach my gospel:" which was succeeded by the promise: "Lo, I am with you always." He immediately forsook all earthly employment, and travelled on with elder Harris towards the south, expecting to go to an association in South Carolina. He was however stopped by a severe spell of sickness, and left by his brethren in a strange part of the world. His sufferings both of mind and body were now extremely severe. But it was only the refiner's fire purging off the dross, and leaving Mr. Picket, like tried gold, to shine with sevenfold splendour. After he was fully recovered from his afflictions, he felt the smiles of God in a more abundant manner than he had ever done. He then commenced his ministerial travels in North Carolina and Virginia, disseminating evangelical seed in various parts. He was still only about 20 years of age. Young as he was, his talents were extensively useful. Many acknowledged him as the messenger of peace to their souls; and several churches were constituted through the instrumentality of his labours. He at length, in 1772, was ordained and took the care of Reedy Bottom, a church raised under his ministry. The work afterwards spreading to Mayo Creek, a church was constituted by the name Mayo; and, soon after, Reedy Bottom was dissolved. To Mayo, Mr. Picket has been the constant and faithful pastor from its constitution until this day. Mr.

Picket stands in the highest estimation wherever he is known. Although old and very infirm, he is unremitting in his labours, and continues his ministrations, not only to his own congregation, but often visits neighbouring churches; especially in matters of distress: For, as a disciplinarian, he is surpassed by none. His talents are more distinguished for warm and searching addresses to the heart, than for deep investigation. He has been, for many years, the moderator of the association; and doubtless fills the chair with as much dignity and propriety as any man in Virginia. When he shall fall asleep, his survivors will say "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

Mayo has also two other ordained preachers within her limits, viz. John Brookes and Abner Harrilason.

WYNN'S CREEK.

It does not appear that this was ever a thriving church. Her members have not for many years, if ever, exceeded what they are now. Planted by the labours of Obadiah Echols, his downfall in all likelihood proved a shock to the church, not easily recovered. An inveterate distress existed in this church, for a long time; which drew the attention of the Association. There were several presbyterian committees sent, before they could effect a remedy. They did not participate in the great revival of 1802.

Obadiah Echols, the planter and the first pastor of this church, was, for many of the first years of his ministry, the most indefatigable, laborious preacher any where in these parts: and being a minister of considerable talents, he advanced the cause of religion to very great extent. But, alas! being a man of impetuous passions, and not keeping them under proper restraint, he fell into gross immorality. The mischief arising from his fall, was commensurate with the good which sprung from his former labours.

Not long before his death, he professed repentance; and was reinstated.

HUNTING CREEK

Was planted by the labours of Rev. Thomas Dobson; and he has continued, from first to last, their pastor. Their course has been as smooth and regular as most churches. They began with eight members; and now have ten times that number.

Elder Dobson, their pastor, is now an old man. He was a native of Essex county, but moved to Halifax when young. He embraced religion in his youthful days; and soon lifted up his voice to invite wanderers into the right way. He has travelled little; but in his small vineyard he has willingly worked: and will, ere long, find his reward, according to the deeds done in the body. He is esteemed by his neighbours of every description, whether saint or sinner, a man of gravity, sincerity, and usefulness.

MUSTERFIELD.

This has always been a small church: yet under the care of their faithful pastor, they have enjoyed love and peace. Elder Leonard Baker, who has been the pastor of this church ever since they had any, is the brother of Elijah Baker, who was so distinguished in planting churches in the early rise of the Baptists. He frequently travelled with his brother; and aided him in many of his useful labours; especially on the Eastern Shore. For many years, elder Baker has confined his labours chiefly to his own vicinity. By those who have a right to know him, he is valued as a man of sincere piety, and a minister of genuine worth. Musterfield did not partake of the great revival.

CHILDRY

Has been a church of no small prosperity. She had not arisen, however, to so distinguished a state,

until the revival in 1801 and 1802. In that work, from first to last, about one hundred were added to Childry. They have now no regular pastor; but are blessed with the stated services of elder Jenkins.

MILLSTONE

Was planted by William Dotson, who also assumed the pastoral care, at their constitution. Dotson was a man of ardent zeal, some talents, and but little prudence. Although he did good, he did it in such a way, that it was often evil spoken of.

Their next pastor, Samuel Brame, was probably one of the most amiable, precious young men that ever ascended the pulpit. He was a native of Caroline, (see Reed's church, page 118,) and embraced religion when very young, under the ministry of the celebrated Mr. Leland. He married in Halifax, and moved into the bounds of Millstone church. He was a great preacher; and bade fair still to be much greater: but for reasons unknown to man, his Maker called him to himself, when quite young. How unsearchable are the ways of God! He was brother to William Brame, mentioned in our account of the church in the city of Richmond.

ARBOUR

Was taken off from a church called Miller's ferry. William Dotson took the care, at her first constitution; but in a very short time John Atkinson was ordained, and then chosen pastor. He has continued to discharge the duties of that office ever since. They have had several revivals of religion; the most remarkable of which was in 1801; and which lasted about two years. Upwards of one hundred and fifty were baptized; by which, the church was swelled to a larger number than she ever had previously. Two churches, Liberty and Miry Creek, were taken off from this church, since the revival, by which her numbers are considerably lessened. Arbour church

has never had less than two preachers within her borders; and some of them men of the most conspicuous talents. Charles Lovelace and William Dossy were raised in this church. At present, besides their pastor, John Kerr, a preacher of celebrity, resides among them.

Elder John Atkinson, who has been their pastor about twenty five years, is a preacher of popular and very useful talents. He travels far and near, and has been the instrument in God's hand of turning many to righteousness. He is a leading man in the Association; and for many years acted as clerk.

Elder John Kerr is a native of North Carolina; and at about nineteen or twenty years of age, believed and was baptized. It was not long after his baptism, before he commenced public speaking. He soon commanded attention. His speech and his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He shortly began to travel, and wherever he went he was highly acceptable. His labours were blessed. Marrying within the limits of Arbour Church, he became a permanent resident. Although he is a member here, he preaches statedly for a church at some distance from him. If Mr. Kerr's attention should not be divided by attempting plans irrelevant to his ministry; he will probably live and die one of the brightest lights of the present age, and receive in heaven a correspondent crown.

POLECAT

Is a small and rather declining church, attended at present, by elder Atkinson. A few were added in the revival of 1802.

MIRY CREEK and LIBERTY

Are two churches taken off from Arbour, soon after the great revival. We are not informed of any thing remarkable among them.

Elder Charles Lovelace, pastor of the former, is

spoken of by his acquaintances as a good man and useful preacher.

DAN RIVER and 12 CORNER,

Are churches not distinguished for any thing remarkable, They have no regular pastors, but have the stated attendance of neighbouring ministers mentioned in their proper places.

Dan River enjoyed a portion of the refreshing showers of 1802.

MOSSINGFORD.

We will extract from the manuscript* of Mr. Williams, the father of this church, the chief of what we shall say respecting it. "They were an arm," says he, "of Sandy Creek church until 1805, but being too remote to attend regularly, they were constituted in December, 1805, with eleven members. They prospered from the beginning; and really excel in harmony and union of the Spirit: and although they are situated so as to mingle continually with Presbyterians and Methodists; a number of whom is in these parts: yet, to the praise of each be it spoken, that, notwithstanding the diversity of sentiments touching externals with the former, and externals and internals with the latter; no rancour nor root of bitterness seems to be encouraged by either party, but a friendly intercourse maintained, by mingling in social and private worship. It is no strange thing, to see a Presbyterian and a Baptist preacher in the same pulpit, each in their turn, addressing the congregation. This union and sociality, carried as far as conscience will admit, is an ornament to religion." These are the words of elder Williams; and his actions squared with the principles here professed. He was a man of catholic temper.

* Many of our historical relations of the churches on the south of James river, are extracted from manuscripts written by Mr. Williams, aided by Mr. Asplund; and which were taken for the purpose of publishing a History of the Baptists of Virginia.

Mossingford sustained a great loss in the death of Mr. Williams. After some years, however, they obtained the pastoral services of Rev. Richard Dabbs; whose ministry among them has received many seals.

BUFFALOE.

This church lies in Mecklenburg, and may be said to be a church of happy standing. They enjoyed, at different times, the pastoral labours of James Reed in his last years, of Henry Lester, of James Watkins, and now of Balaam Izzel a man of God and a faithful servant of his people. Buffaloe was one of the favoured places in the time of the great revival. Ninety were added.

SENECA

Is a young and thriving church, under the ministerial care of Nathaniel Lovelace, a young and promising preacher.

MILL CHURCH.

This church was planted by the labours of Rev. John Creel, a Regular Baptist preacher, who about 1765, moved from Fauquier into these parts. In 1770, the church was constituted according to the mode of the Regular Baptists, under the name of Birch Creek; and on the same year, joined the Ketocton Association. They continued to send delegates to that association, until 1773; when finding it inconvenient to attend at so great a distance, and the prejudice between Regular and Separate, wearing away, they were dismissed, and joined the Separates. The names Mill and Birch creek, appear to have been often confounded in the minutes of the Association. They had additions to the amount of one hundred, in the revival of 1802.

John Creel, their first pastor and planter of the church, was a most amiable man, and a very successful preacher. His talents though not conspicuous,

were solid, and being well occupied, with his five, he gained other five. He was universally beloved by all descriptions of people. At about 52 years of age, while assisting in raising a house, he was accidentally killed, by the fall of a log. *Time and chance happeneth to all men.*

UPPER BANISTER.

This church has been much more numerous than at present.*

William Blair, their present pastor, is a preacher that holds fast the faithful word, as he has been taught. He has already done much good, and being in the vigour of life, bids fair to do much more.

COUNTY LINE.

This is an old church, and once a very flourishing one. Rev. Samuel Harris was their first pastor. Although she is represented in the table, as having commenced her church-state in 1771, which is substantially correct; yet the name is not to be found in any of the association minutes for many years after that time. Falls Creek appears to have been her original name; and which was probably changed by the constitution of new churches. She is the offspring of old Dan river church, now dissolved; and is, herself, the mother of many others. Each of her pastors are mentioned elsewhere.

RICH CREEK and UNION

Were the offspring and care of the pious and faithful Richard Elliott; who lived respected and died lamented. He was succeeded in the care of Union, by James Tompkins, mentioned page 240. After Tompkins's dereliction, they were happy enough to

* Churches used so often to change their names, that it is now really difficult to identify an old church. In the minutes of the General Association for 1774, the church called Banister was the largest in Virginia having two hundred members. It was the only one of that name.

procure the pastoral labours of Elder David Nowlen. Birch Creek was a partaker in a small degree, of the revival of 1802, thirty were added.

BENNETT'S.

This church was the fruit of elder James Kenny's ministry, who also was their first pastor. Elder Griffith Dickerson succeeded Mr. Kenney, and Mr. Jenkins succeeded Mr. Dickerson. The two last were not regular pastors; but attended them as supplies.

Rev. James Kenney, their first pastor, was a Methodist preacher, previous to his being baptized. When he first joined the Baptists, he retained some tincture of Arminianism. This created some obstacles in his ordination, as a Baptist preacher. He, however, was ordained; and continued many years as pastor. The question, whether an Arminian preacher ought to be ordained, was agitated here, with some warmth: and not only here, but in many other places. It is certainly a question of no small difficulty. The doubt, we conceive, is not, whether it is lawful, but, whether it is expedient. To decide questions of expediency, much regard ought to be paid to circumstances. Exactly the same decision might not be proper in different places. Paul circumcised Timothy at Lystra; but would not circumcise Titus at Jerusalem.

WHITETHORN.

Of this church, we have no information of any thing very remarkable.

Elder Mathew Bates, their father and first pastor, was an amiable and eminent minister of God's word. The few years, in which God permitted him to work in his vineyard, were well employed. He died at an early period of life, lamented, just as far as he was known.

Willis Hopwood, their present pastor, is a young

man of a strong and ingenious mind. May he have a double portion of his predecessor's spirit.

LOWER BANISTER

Is one of the largest and most respectable churches, not only in Roanoke, but in any other place.

Mr. Jenkins, who has been their pastor from the beginning, is a minister indeed. He was a native of Fauquier county, and was baptized previous to his removal to Pittsylvania. He was ordained to the ministry, 1794; and has been one of the most successful preachers ever since. Several churches have been planted by his labours; and all those which he attends, seem to prosper, more or less. He has a mind susceptible of great improvement; and although for want of opportunity, when young, his education was rather small; yet his literary attainments, acquired by dint of close attention, are very considerable. A few years past he published a treatise on 'believers' baptism, and one on final perseverance; both of which display considerable ingenuity, and the latter was much admired.

Lower Banister enjoyed the revival of 1801 and 1802, beyond any of her sisters. Two hundred and fifty new born sons and daughters were added to her former family.

STINKING RIVER

Is the offspring of the excellent Mr. Bates. Elder Griffith Dickerson, their present pastor, though a man of some age, has not been a great many years in the pulpit. He is an old revolutionary soldier. He spent his time when young, in honourably fighting for his country: his last days he devotes to the still more honourable occupation of marshalling the host of Israel. His present weapons, however, are not carnal but mighty. As a preacher, when ardently engaged he displays talents and animation, by which,

his hearers *take knowledge of him, that he has been with Jesus.*

SHOCKOE

Is rather a thriving church. They have had from the first, as pastor, elder David Nowlen. If we may judge of him from the various appointments for presbyteries, committees, &c. thrown upon him by the Association; we must say, he appears to be a servant ready to every good word and work.

DOUBLE CREEK, ZION HILL, AND STEWART'S CREEK,

Are small churches in this Association; concerning which we have not learned any thing remarkable.

Elder George Roberts, now a resident of North Carolina, in Flat River Association; and who now acts there as moderator; was once an active and successful preacher in Virginia. He professed religion shortly after the rise of the Baptists in Virginia; and putting his hand to the plough, has never yet looked back. He greatly assisted in accomplishing the great ecclesiastical revolution in the state. He often attends the Roanoke Association, and is useful in their councils.

TABLE OF STRAWBERRY ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Goole Creek | | | 100 | N. Shrewsbury | N. Shrewsbury and J. Preston | W. Leftwich | Bedford |
| Little Otter | 1797 | 90 | 200 | N. Shrewsbury | I. Fuquay | J. Moorman | do |
| Otter North | | | 100 | J. Anthony | J. Anthony | J. Anthony | do |
| Fork of Otter | | | | J. Hatcher | J. Hatcher | G. Rucker | do |
| Staunton River | | | 40 | W. Johnson | W. Johnson | J. Black | do |
| Beaver Dam | 1801 | 36 | 180 | J. Preston | J. Preston | J. Burnet | do |
| Suck Spring | 1805 | 28 | | I. Fuquay | J. Carter & I. Fuquay | none | do |
| Timber Ridge | 1805 | 40 | 90 | I. Fuquay | I. Fuquay | I. Fuquay | do |
| Difficult | | | 12 | A. Weeks | A. Weeks | A. Weeks | do |
| Buffaloe Rock | | | 26 | N. Shrewsbury | N. Shrewsbury | none | Rockbridge |
| Spring Mill | 1804 | 30 | 35 | W. Moorman | W. Moorman | none | Bottetourt |
| Creek Gills | 1804 | 32 | 28 | W. Moorman | W. Moorman | none | do |
| Creek Chapel | | 20 | 30 | W. Johnson | J. Fears | W. Turner | Franklin |
| Bethel Black | 1804 | 18 | | — Douglas | — Douglas | J. Pedigo | do |
| Water | 1804 | 62 | 65 | J. Pedigo | J. Pedigo | J. Ashworth | do |
| Pig River | 1773 | 28 | | W. Turner | W. Turner | W. Turner | do |
| Snow Creek | | | | R. Hall | R. Hall | J. Pedigo | do |
| Snow Creek | | | | R. Stockton | R. Stockton | J. Pedigo | do |
| Creek and Pig River | | | | | | J. Ashworth | do |
| Smith's River | | | | R. Hall | R. Hall | J. Pedigo | Patrick |
| Jack's Creek | 1804 | | | J. Pedigo | J. Pedigo | S. Hubbard, | do |
| Leather Wood | 1772 | | | J. Pedigo | J. Pedigo | &c. | do |
| Beaver Creek | | | | R. Stockton | R. Stockton | J. King | Henry |
| Burton's Creek | | | | | J. Anthony | J. King, | do |
| | 1806 | 30 | 30 | J. Anthony | J. Anthony | &c. J. Anthony | do |
| | | | | J. Anthony | J. Anthony | J. Anthony | Campbell |

CHAPTER XXII.

History of the Strawberry Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

It appears from the most authentic documents, that this association was constituted previous to the dissolution of the General Association, and about the year 1776. For at a meeting of a General Association, in the year 1782; as appears from the minutes; the Strawberry Association corresponded. The entry is made in the following words, viz. "Robert Stockton, a messenger from the Strawberry Association with a letter, was admitted to his seat." And again, towards the close of the minutes, is the following entry: "The clerk is directed to write a letter to the Strawberry Association, in answer to theirs; with a copy of our proceedings."

The first labourers in the ministry, in this district, appear to have been the two Murphys, viz. William and Joseph, Samuel Harris, and Dutton Lane. Soon after the rise of the Baptists in these parts, there were several preachers called to the work. The most distinguished, and the most useful of whom, was Robert Stockton. Through the indefatigable labours of him and others, the cause of religion flourished to a considerable extent. The churches from the bounds of this association met in the General Association, until the division in 1776; after which, they probably continued as an independent association; and corresponded with the General Association only by messengers sent from the Association.

When this district first became independent, it must have had very few churches. For in 1787, there were only eleven churches, and ten ordained preachers. From 1787 to 1793, the increase both of churches and preachers, was very great. For, after striking off New River district, there remained

sixteen ordained ministers in Strawberry. In 1798, after Mayo was taken off, there remained twelve churches and eight ordained preachers. In 1808, they had twenty four churches and sixteen ordained preachers. From which it appears they just doubled their number both of preachers and churches in ten years.

While Mr. Stockton was among them, he generally acted as moderator. Of late years, that office falls sometimes to one and sometimes to another. Richard Stockton is at present their standing clerk.

This association when first constituted, included all the churches in Virginia on the south side of James river and above the upper line of Roanoke (then Middle District). When New River was taken off, it was agreed that the Blue ridge should be the dividing line between that and Strawberry. When Mayo was taken off, it was agreed that the boundary between that and Strawberry, should be as follow, viz. "Beginning at elder Stephen's church, leaving it on the south side; thence to Smith's river at the mouth of Beaver creek; thence up the said river to the Tarararat mountain." They have not printed their minutes of late years. This circumstance added to some other causes, prevented our obtaining as full documents as was necessary in order to give as perfect a relation of her proceedings, as of other associations. The proceedings of the Association, however, as far as we can learn, have been regular and peaceable. We must now proceed to the sketches of churches; beginning with

GOOSE CREEK.

The great revival in the churches of Roanoke Association, in 1802, spread into Strawberry; and continued four or five years. Goose Creek shared largely in the divine blessing. It commenced among them in 1802, and continued about two years; in which time, about one hundred were added to the church.

Their number, however, was lessened by the constitution of Beaver Dam, in 1804. Two young preachers were raised in the revival, viz. William Leftwich, their present pastor,* and Joshua Burnet: both of whom have been since ordained.

OTTER

Is a church of respectable standing. In 1804, a great revival arose in this church, and continued about two years. Many were baptized, and a new church constituted from them called Burton's Creek. Elder John Anthony has been the pastor of this church for many years. Although he has done much, he is not yet weary in well doing. He does not travel extensively, but is desirous to keep his own vineyard well dressed.

LITTLE OTTER.

The revival seems to have been more extensive here, than in any church. The windows of heaven were opened, towards the close of the year 1801; abundant showers of refreshing rain were poured forth upon them during the years 1802 and 1803. As many as two hundred and twenty five persons were baptized; three preachers thrust into the harvest, viz. John Carter, William Moorman, and James H. L. Moorman; and two new churches constituted, viz. Timber Ridge, and Suck Spring. The members of Little Otter live in and about the town called Liberty.

NORTH FORK OF OTTER.

No information has been received respecting this church, except what may be seen in the table.

* In treating of churches, it is very desirable to exhibit short characteristics of their ministers; and, indeed, of distinguished private members; but our information of this association is so contracted, that there are few ministers of whom we can say any thing.

STAUNTON.

This church, though now small, participated in the revival. Elder John Black and elder John Jenkins were chief agents in the work.

BEAVER DAM, SUCK SPRING, AND
TIMBER RIDGE,

Are all new churches, constituted since the revival, and all mentioned in treating of the mother churches.

DIFFICULT CREEK

Is a small church, of which we know nothing more than what may be seen in the table.

BUFFALOE

Is the only Baptist church in Rockbridge. A part of her members formerly lived in Bottetourt. In 1803, God lifted up the light of his countenance upon them; and continued to be gracious, in adding to them such as should be saved, for about two years and a half; until about seventy five were baptized. Rock Spring and Mill Creek were taken off from Buffaloe. A good preacher is one of the best gifts of heaven to a pious people; but if he unfortunately forgets his sacred character, and neglects to keep his body under, and thereby becomes a castaway; the affliction is then more than commensurate with the former blessing. Buffaloe found it necessary to exclude her once useful minister.

ROCK SPRING and MILL CREEK

Were constituted from Buffaloe, and were attended statedly by her pastor, and who was also, in a degree, father to these churches. His backsliding of course was very afflicting to them. Their prospects are not promising.

GILL'S CREEK.

This church was also revived, in 1802, under the ministry of elder Wilson Turner. A considerable number were added. The church called Black Water was a daughter of Gill's Creek.

PIG RIVER AND SNOW CREEK

Is a church of good standing, attended by elder John Ashworth. The reader will recollect that in our account of Sandy Creek church, Meherrin Association, we mentioned that John Ashworth, a preacher, moved with a party from Sandy Creek into Franklin county; and there formed a new church, composed chiefly of those that had moved with him. Mr. Ashworth has continued to be a steady and useful minister.

CHAPEL, BETHEL, BLACK WATER,
and PIG RIVER.

Of these four churches we know nothing more than can be found in the table, and in what is said of them in treating of other churches.

SNOW CREEK

Has now no resident pastor, but was for many years under the pastoral care of elder Robert Stockton now residing in Kentucky.

Mr. Stockton is a native of Albemarle county, and was born December 12th, 1743. He became religiously impressed while a young man; and had joined the communion of the Presbyterians, among whom, however, he was brought up: but afterwards forming an acquaintance with some of the Baptist preachers, he was convinced of the impropriety of infant baptism, and was baptized by Rev. Samuel Harris, anno 1771. After his baptism, he quickly commenced preacher. His labours were blessed; and many churches either directly or indirectly, arose

through his instrumentality. In his communications to the editor, he states that he was at the constitution of eleven churches in the Strawberry Association. Although his usefulness was so obvious in this country, and although he was among the richest men in those parts, his mind was not at rest. From some cause, not known to the compiler, he moved to Kentucky, and settled within the limits of Green River Association. To leave a people, among whom his ministry had been manifestly and extensively owned of God, is a hazardous thing for a preacher of the gospel; and ought never to be done upon slight or trivial grounds or for the sake of worldly emolument, nor without strong marks of the divine approbation. Mr. Stockton had always an inclination to travel; and perhaps no man ever travelled to greater advantage. For possessing an invincible boldness, it was quite unimportant to him what kind of house he went to, whether saint or sinner, friend or opposer. He never failed, wherever he went, to enter largely into religious conversation; and having great command of his temper, and great presence of mind, he often made religious impressions, upon minds previously swallowed up by prejudice. It was also an invariable rule with him, to propose, and if permitted, to perform family worship. In doing this, he would often exhort a half hour or more, to the family. It is very entertaining to hear Mr. Stockton relate the various adventures of his life respecting things of this sort.

His talents, as a preacher, are hardly up to mediocrity; and no man thinks less of them than himself: but his talent for exhortation is very considerable. The way, by the bye, that he has done so much good, has not been through his great or numerous talents, but by occupying such as he had in an industrious manner. If his strokes were not very heavy, he gave the more of them: if the iron was dull, he put to, more strength.

SMITH's RUN and JACK's CREEK.

Very little, unnoticed in the table, has reached us, respecting these churches.

Joseph Pedigo, the pastor of Smith's Run, as far as we can hear, is a man of weight in religious matters, in those parts. He sometimes acts as moderator of the association.

LEATHERWOOD

Was formerly under the care of Robert Stockton, but now of John King.

Elder King has been already mentioned in treating of Meherrin church in Meherrin Association. Few men open their mouths, in the pulpit, more to the purpose than Mr. King. His language is strong and nervous, his ideas clear and perspicuous, his manner warm and animating, and his countenance grave and solemn. Though modest and unassuming out of the pulpit, when he ascends the sacred stand, he speaks as one having authority; he lifts up his voice and commands all men to repent. His life has been an honour to his Master's cause; and when he has ceased to suffer here, doubtless his death will be glorious.

BEAVER CREEK and BURTON CREEK.

Of these churches we have no information not already detailed.

TABLE OF NEW RIVER ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Bethel | 1774 | 21 | 78 | | S. Goodwin | J. Polack | |
| Salem | 1784 | 25 | 35 | | W. Howard | W. Howard | Wythe |
| Greasy Creek | 1789 | 16 | 13 | R. Jones | R. Jones | R. Jones | Montgomery |
| Meadow Creek | 1785 | 28 | 27 | J. Lawrence | J. Lawrence | W. Howard | do |
| North Fork of Roanoke | 1801 | 27 | 28 | J. Mathews | J. Mathews | I. Rentsfro | do |
| West Fork | 1803 | 30 | 28 | J. Jones | J. Jones | J. Jones | do |
| Pine Creek | 1803 | 40 | 51 | | W. Howard | P. Howard | do |
| Sinking Creek | 1796 | 17 | 33 | J. Stanley | | J. Stanley | Giles |
| Catawba | 1780 | 20 | 55 | | S. Goodwin | none | Botetourt |

CHAPTER XXIII.

History of the New River Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

This Association was taken off from the Strawberry, and formed into a separate association in 1793. They met, for the first time, in October, 1794, and organized themselves. Their number of churches at first was only seven or eight. The dividing line between this and the Strawberry, is the Blue ridge. It may be seen by the table, in what part of the state the district lies. The business of the Association has been conducted in prudence, peace, and harmony. It appears that the Baptist interest prevails more than that of any other religious society. There being only two or three Presbyterian congregations in the district, and but few Methodist classes. Between these and the Baptists, a good understanding subsists. Infomuch, that a considerable party were of opinion in the Association, that they ought to invite the

Presbyterian and Methodist ministers to sit with them in their associations, as confessors; but not to vote. This subject underwent a lengthy investigation, and finally was decided against inviting. This was assuredly a very prudent determination, 1st, because it might tend to confusion; and 2dly, because it would probably rather interrupt, than promote friendship. Seeing, in most cases, as it respects the intercourse between man and man, too much familiarity often ends in strife. We should be more likely to continue in peace with a neighbour, whom we treated with the distant respect due to a neighbour, than if we were to introduce him to our private domestic concerns. It cannot, however, but be earnestly desired, that party animosity should be mollified by every rational method. Party rage is never the effect of true religion. Well might Paul ask the Corinthian partizans, "Are ye not carnal?" Stedfastness in our own principles, and charity towards those of others, are not inconsistent with each other.

The minutes of the New River Association, have never been printed. Hence it was not possible to procure them for every session; nor indeed is it important. We have them for four years; from which the character of the Association may be understood. The Calvinistic sentiments are the doctrines of this Association. Yet there are not wanting some, who hold some or all of the Arminian tenets. Their views upon this point, may be gathered from the following query, with its solution, viz. Is it right to license any man to preach the gospel, who holds with Arminian tenets? Answer: By no means.

At an association holden at Pine Creek meeting house, second Saturday in October, 1803: William Howard was appointed moderator, and Joseph Rentfro clerk.

The following query was introduced, viz. Ought not experienced ministers of the gospel to take under their patronage, the young and illiterate preachers?

To which it was answered, Yes: and teach them true principles and sound doctrines: and set good examples before them: and say, Be ye followers of us as we are of Christ Jesus. Could the principle contained in this solution be carried into effect, by some regular and methodical plan, it would produce the most sovereign relief to the Baptist ministry in Virginia. It has been a general complaint against the Baptists of Virginia, that they sanction men for the ministry, who do not possess the necessary qualifications. These complaints, without doubt, have often sprung from a corrupt taste; and also from men of refined minds, who did not make the proper allowance for hearers of less refinement. Yet with all due allowance, the complaint is sometimes well founded. The evil has arisen, partly from not making proper distinctions as to gifts; so as to authorise men to preach, who at most only had the gift of exhortation; and partly from a false delicacy in setting up weak preachers, where the people were in expectation of hearing others more capable. If then, some regular mode of examining and introducing young preachers could be devised, many weak gifts would be improved, and become respectable. Add to this some regulation, as to the kind of qualifications each man may properly claim, as well as the time and manner of exercising his talent; and it is not unlikely the inconvenience would be lessened, if not quite removed. In England, and indeed in some parts of America, no man is allowed to preach, unless he first make his wishes known to some of the elders of the church; they then give him a private hearing, and encourage or stop him, according to their opinion of his qualifications. A middle course between that and the Virginia mode, might be useful. At least, inhibit any from preaching at other than an appointment made for himself, until he be licensed by the church: and indeed, as to licensed or ordained preachers, the wishes of an audience ought to be consulted, more

ference to the sensibility of an individual. At their association for October, 1804, the knotty and intricate doctrine of supporting preachers, or rather of ministerial contributions, was brought forward in the following query : Are the poor bound by the gospel to give to the rich, for preaching the gospel? Answer. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.

All things considered, a better answer could not probably have been invented.

The circular letters annexed to the minutes of this Association, are very excellent ; and but for the want of room, extracts from some of them would have been inserted.

Rev. William Howard has generally acted as moderator, and Mr. Joseph Rentfro as clerk.

We will now attend to the churches in this district ; beginning with

BETHEL.

This church was the first constituted, and of course the oldest in the Association. We have not learned, by whose labours this church was first planted. It is quite probable that it was by removal of the first members from some of the interior counties. It had no regular supplies or pastor for seventeen years after the constitution. The presumption is, that if the church had been raised by the labours of any minister visiting those parts, that such minister would have supplied them regularly. Their first regular preacher was Mr. Samuel Goodwin, who moved into their bounds, and became their pastor. He continued among them about ten years, and then returned to Catawba, from whence he first came to Bethel. Bethel then obtained the attendance of Mr. Howard, who preached for them once a month, until a few years past, when old age and infirmities put it out of his power. While Mr. Howard had the care of the church, about the year 1804, a comfortable

revival took place, when the church increased from sixteen to seventy eight. Since Mr. Howard has declined his visits to them, they have procured the services of Rev. John Black, who it is said, is an able preacher.

SALEM

Was constituted, as may be seen by the table, in 1784; and fell under the care of Mr. Nathan Hall. He retained the charge about six years, and was then silenced for misconduct. After about four or five years, the church turned their attention to Mr. Howard, who has been their pastor ever since. In the year 1802, God visited them with a goodly time. Many precious souls were turned to righteousness. When Mr. Howard took the care of them, their number was thirteen: the revival raised them to seventy nine. In 1803, they dismissed forty members for the purpose of forming a new church; which was called Pine Creek.

Rev. William Howard, pastor of Salem church and moderator of the Association, is a venerable old man; who seems resolved to exert the last remains of life and strength, in advancing the glory of him who has called him from darkness to light, How useful are such men, to go out and in, before the young and less experienced.

GREASY CREEK

Was raised under the labours of the Rev. Robert Jones. About the year 1803, God revived his work among them, chiefly through the ministry of Mr. Jesse Jones son of Robert, a young and ardent preacher whose labours were accepted of his master, so that their number increased to forty three members: thirty of these were taken off in order to form a new church; which was called West Fork: to which Jesse Jones became pastor. Mr. Shadrach Roberts is a licensed preacher in this church.

MEADOW CREEK

Was formed, partly out of members who moved hither from the state of New York, and partly of natives. Rev. John Lawrence became their pastor. He had been a minister, for many years, in the state of New York; was an eminent servant of Christ, and a pious and sensible man. His labours were not very much blessed after he moved to Virginia. Some disturbance happening in the church, and Mr. Lawrence being obviously in dotage, was rather indiscreet in espousing one of the parties, so as to give some discontent to the body of the church: in consequence of which, added to his incapacity through dotage and infirmities, the church dismissed him from his pastoral charge. Soon after, he was taken ill, and God dismissed him to the church triumphant. He was eighty years of age when he died. After his dismissal, elder Howard preached for them statedly, and God poured out his spirit upon them. The church increased from sixteen to sixty four. Elder Howard, through infirmity, is not able to visit them statedly, as formerly; but he attends them occasionally and administers the ordinances. Robert Simpkins is a licensed preacher in the bounds of this church.

NORTH FORK OF ROANOKE

Was planted chiefly by the labours of Rev. James Mathews. He some years past moved to Tennessee. After the removal of Mr. Mathews, they had Mr. Isaac Rentfro for their minister. He moved to Kentucky in 1798. Since which, they have had no pastor. In 1802, there was a general revival in Montgomery county. This church partook of the blessing: nineteen were added.

SINKING CREEK

Was raised under the ministry of Mr. Joseph Stanlèy ; who is still their pastor. Under his labours the church has prospered : having increased from seventeen to thirty three.

CATAWBA,

When first constituted, had no pastor. Samuel Goodwin was their first pastor, who took place about 1781 or 1782. He retained his charge for about ten years, and then moving away to Bethel, after about ten years came back and resumed his care of Catawba. About 1805, he was excluded for intemperate drinking. He, until that time, had borne a most amiable character for piety and integrity ; and was esteemed an excellent preacher, and very active and useful. Gracious heaven ! how many thousands of the professed sons of Zion are overturned by this deadly evil ! This church partook in the revival.

WEST FORK. (*See Greasy Creek.*)

PINE CREEK

Is a flourishing church, chiefly taken off from Salem. Has a promising arm on Brush Creek, where Henry Beal lives and labours in the ministry, and who is an ordained minister.

TAILES OF HOLSTON AND MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATIONS.

HOLSTON ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| N. Fork of Holston | 1783 | 12 | 36 | J. Frost | M. Foley | C. Pennington | Washington |
| S. Fork of Holston or St. Clair's Bottom | 1791 | 45 | 69 | A. Baker, &c. | A. Baker | M. Foley jr | do |
| Millcreek Valley | 1799 | 8 | 65 | M. Foley and W Brundrage | W. Wilfon | W. Wilfon | do |
| Rich Valley | 1802 | 26 | 27 | | M. Foley | J. Foley | do |
| Glade Hollows | 1788 | 30 | 170 | T. Burgefs & S. Goodwin | T Hanstord | D. Kelly | Ruffel |
| Ruffel | 1805 | 12 | 32 | J. Wilfon and S. Hilton | S. Hilton | S. Hilton | do |
| Stony Creek | 1802 | 12 | 65 | E. Kelly | E. Kelly | W. Wells | do |
| Copper Creek | 1808 | 16 | 16 | D. Jaffe, W. Wells, and E Kelly | R. Kilgore | R Kilgore | do |
| Castle Woods | 1806 | 51 | 51 | E. Kelly, W. Wilfon | D. Jaffe | D. Jaffe | do |
| Deep Spring | 1797 | 11 | 60 | | J. Flanery | J. Flanery | Lee |

MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION.

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------|----|-----|--|---------------|------------|---------|
| N. Fork of New River | 1796 | 13 | 13 | | W. Porter and | | |
| Meadow Creek | 1797 | 18 | 100 | | W. Porter | D. Keith | Grayson |
| Cedar Il- and, or Fox Creek | 1782 | 15 | 77 | | A. Mitchel | A. Mitchel | do |
| | | | | | T. Evans | A. Baker | do |

CHAPTER XXIV.

History of the Holston and Mountain Associations, including the Sketches of Churches.

The Holston Association was constituted about the year 1788, according to Asplund's Register. They have adopted the confession of faith. They had

eighteen churches in all, in 791. We are informed, from an authentic source, that they had twenty five churches in 1807, viz. fifteen in the state of Tennessee and ten in Virginia; and their whole number of members, one thousand six hundred and nineteen; averaging not quite sixty five to a church. Those churches that are in Virginia average a little more than fifty nine. There were two Baptist churches in the bounds of this district, at a much earlier date than any mentioned in the table; but they were broken up by the Indian war. We have no account of the proceedings of the Holston Association; we must therefore proceed to speak of the churches; beginning with

NORTH FORK OF HOLSTON.

Two large companies have emigrated from this church, in each case taking off their pastor, viz. John Frost, their first pastor, moved into Knox county, Tennessee, carrying with him thirty three members; and there they became a church. This happened about '94 or '95. In '98, they got another pastor, Moses Foley; but, 1802, Foley and twenty six members moved to Abraham's Creek and formed another church. In 1808, they procured the pastoral care of Charles Pennington. It is a church of good standing.

GLADE HOLLOW.

This was taken off from Clinch River church; which is one of the two old churches mentioned above, as broken up by the war. A few members returning after the war, the church was reconstituted. But shortly after Glade Hollows was taken off, the mother church was dissolved. Glade Hollows has always been a prosperous church; but particularly, anno 1801, under the ministration of Edward Kelley, they had a blessed revival; when the church, in the course of eighteen months, swelled to three

hundred and sixty. After this, three other churches were taken off, viz. Stony Creek, Sandy Creek, and Castlewoods.

SOUTH FORK or St. CLAIR's BOTTOM,

Was for many years, without a pastor, and then really flourished. But, aiming to choose a pastor, they could not be unanimous. The majority chose Mr. Baker, but a party adhered to Mr. William Brundrage, an emigrant from the north. They were a divided, and consequently an unhappy people, until Brundrage moved to Ohio, in 1805. They then became united: Proving that preachers may be the greatest curse, as well as the greatest blessing.

MILL CREEK

Has been a happy church. Beginning with only eight members, they have increased to sixty five.

RICH VALLEY

Was at first a thriving church; but through the misconduct of their pastor, Moses Foley, they have had cloudy and unpleasant seasons.

RUSSEL.

There is nothing remarkable of her, except that her members are in union and good understanding.

DEEP SPRING

Had a comfortable revival in 1801, and increased to their present number. They are doing well.

STONY CREEK.

This church was also revived about 1802 and 1803, and increased to about eighty five. Since then, although they have had cold times, they have preserved order, &c.

COPPER CREEK

As at the beginning, so now, they enjoy union and peace.*

CASTLE WOODS.

Nothing remarkable, is said of her in our manuscripts

We would gladly exhibit the characters and talents of the preachers and distinguished private members of this and the mountain association, but for the want of information we are unable to do so. The documents we have procured at all respecting the different associations on the western waters, have all been obtained through the friendly attention of Rev. Josiah Osburn and John Alderson. Our numerous letters written to the ministers residing within the limits of the Associations were not attended to.

MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION was constituted August, 1799; the churches having been previously dismissed from the Yadkin Association, and is composed of churches in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Three only are in Virginia, of which we will say a few things; beginning with

NORTH FORK OF NEW RIVER.

William Porter was the pastor of this church. But being unable through old age, to go through the duties of the ministry; the church associated Daniel Keith in the pastoral care. This circumstance often occurs in England, but very rarely in Virginia. It much oftener happens in Virginia, that one minister is pastor of three or four churches, than that the same church has more than one pastor. The committing the ministerial authority of the

* Deep Spring, Stoney Creek, and Copper Creek had not joined any association in 1808. It was expected they would join at the next session.

church, to more than one elder, has in this country, often been found upon experience, to be bad policy. It often creates parties. In some cases, such as the above, however, it is very well.

MEADOW CREEK.

God has showered down his grace upon this church. They have been a happy and an increasing people.

FOX CREEK

Was at first a flourishing church ; but their preacher becoming disorderly, and eventually excluded, they fell into confusion and distress.

The removal of elder Andrew Baker among them, in 1803, under God, healed all their backslidings. God turned their mourning into joy, by turning many to righteousness. For several years Mr. Baker had the gratification to see his Master's work prosper in his hands.

TABLE OF ACCOMACK ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches. | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution. | Present Members. | By whom planted. | Former Pastors. | Present Pastors. | Counties. |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Pungoteague | 1790 | | 135 | E. Baker & G. Layfield | | G. Layfield | Accomack |
| Matokin | 1785 | 20 | 105 | E. Baker | | G. Layfield | do |
| Chingoteague | 1786 | | 132 | E. Baker | G. Layfield S. Marshall | T. Waters | do |
| Maffongo | 1779 | | 124 | E. Baker | G. Northun G. Layfield E. Shay | T. Waters and J. Benston | do |
| Lower Northampton | 1778 | 5 | 219 | E. Baker | E. Baker | J. Elliott | Northampton |
| Hungo's | 1783 | | 126 | E. Baker | E. Baker | J. Elliott | do |
| Maffapungo | 1807 | 27 | 50 | E. Baker | C. Fisher | A. Fisher | do |

CHAPTER XXV.

History of the Accomack Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

The Accomack Association district lies altogether on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The gospel was first carried thither by Elijah Baker. After Mr. Baker had planted a number of churches, both on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia; and had been joined by other preachers from different parts, as well as by young ones raised under his ministry; he proposed that the churches should meet by their delegates and form an Association. This they did, anno 1784.† They took the name of the Salisbury Association, from the town of that name in Maryland, where they met. They also became a fostering mother to the churches. They increased from year

* See our biography of Elijah Baker.

† According to Asplund's Register, from communications made to the Compiler, he is inclined to think that they associated at an earlier date.

to year, and many useful preachers were raised up. The business of the Association was conducted with great decorum, and their decisions were wise and prudent. Doctor Robert Lemon, a practitioner of physic, but not a preacher, acted as moderator, from shortly after their organization, until the division of the district, in 1808. During many years, it was customary for them to hold their annual associations in Maryland near Salisbury, but they held also an occasional association in Virginia, every August. This arrangement was not satisfactory to the Virginia churches, and they petitioned to be dismissed, in order to form an association out of the churches, wholly in Virginia. This was done; and the new association called Accomack, met for the first time at Pungoteague, August, 1809: at which session they were chiefly employed in forming a constitution and rules of decorum. They also agreed to join the General Meeting of Correspondence. At this session elder George Layfield was chosen as moderator, and Mr. William Costen as clerk. As this is the first and only meeting they have had since the division, nothing more can be said as to their proceedings. The historical sketches of the churches must now be attended to.

PUNGOTEAGUE

Is a large and happy church. For sometime after their constitution they had no regular pastor. But for a good many years they have been under the pastoral care of Rev. George Layfield, to whom they listen as children to a father.

Mr. Layfield is indeed a father in Israel. He has long professed to know the way of life, and has never since departed from it, either to the right hand or to the left. He was a Presbyterian, previous to his hearing the Baptists, and could not for some time after he heard them and loved them, bring his mind

to be willing to give up his infant sprinkling. He finally yielded to the force of truth, and being baptized, commenced preacher. His first residence was in Maryland, where he continued for many years before he became a preacher: In point of talents, Mr. Layfield may be considered as standing on respectable ground. He does not aim to speak in the enticing words of man's wisdom; but, in simplicity and godly sincerity, commends himself to every man's conscience. He is a man of grave deportment, yet cheerful manners. He is liberal in his sentiments towards those who differ with him on religious subjects.

MATOMPKIN.

This church has also the stated services of elder Layfield, and are peaceable and harmonious. They have never had any regular pastor.

MASONGO

Is a church of good standing, but has seen better days than the present. Their first preacher was George Northum, who was not distinguished for any thing singular. He was succeeded by Mr. Layfield, and he by Elijah Shay. Shay was a preacher of popular talents; but after raising himself to considerable distinction, he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. He became a drunkard, and was excluded from the church. Failing thus of the grace of God, he sought to supply the deficiency by art and deception. He moved off to Alexandria, where also, he conducted himself so disorderly, as to incur the censures of all those who made pretensions to seriousness. From thence, he travelled off, under the name of a Baptist preacher; until the brethren near Alexandria, thought it their duty to advertise him as an impostor; which they did in the minutes of the Ke-tecton Association. What mischief do such traitors do to the best of causes!

CHINGOTEAGUE.

The gospel was first carried into these parts by the indefatigable E. Baker. His labours were not at first, extensively blessed, immediately in the neighbourhood of Chingoteague. The seed however sown by Mr. Baker and others, were cultivated by Mr. Layfield; and a church was constituted under the care of elder Layfield. After some time, he yielded the care to elder Solomon Marshall, who attended them statedly, but not as an abiding pastor. They now have the pastoral services of elder Thomas Walters, whose labours among them have been highly blessed. Mr. Walters is a loving, zealous, laborious, and successful servant of the most high God. Having a warm heart, he enjoys nothing, more than to see divine love spreading from heart to heart, warming and animating the souls of saints. On such occasions he seems willing to be spent in praising and adoring his gracious Redeemer.

LOWER NORTHAMPTON.

Within the bounds of this church, was the place where Mr. Baker began his evangelical career. Here also, were the first persons baptized that ever submitted to that sacred ordinance on the Eastern Shore: And here was constituted the first church. When first organized, elder Baker became their pastor; and so continued until the day of his death. The church soon after her constitution became large and flourishing, and continues so to this time. There are some very respectable private members among them. Elder John Elliott preaches for them statedly since the death of elder Baker.

Isaac Broughton is an ordained preacher in this church, esteemed, by all who know him, a pious and venerable man, but of very infirm health.

HUNGO's

Has been for some time a declining church, having sustained great losses by the death of many of her most valuable private members. They were once a numerous people.

Elder Elliott, their pastor, commenced preaching in 1783, when about thirty years of age, but he had been a professor for some time before. Seeing how much labourers were wanted in the harvest, his spirit was moved within him, He stepped forward, and the Lord smiled upon his services. He is esteemed by all his acquaintances a pious and exemplary man, as well as a steady and useful preacher.

MASHAPONGO

Is a young and somewhat increasing church, under the care of elder Caleb Fisher. Previous to his profession of religion, Mr. Fisher was very fond of the fashionable vices of the age. Racing, dancing, gambling, and keeping wild and wanton company, were the objects of his most intent pursuit. Serious reflections, though sometimes forced upon his mind, were never welcome. God, in the midst of his wild career, marked him as an object of invincible grace. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in him; and although he was at first as an ox unaccustomed to the yoke, he finally found that the yoke of Jesus was easy and his burden was light. He found rest to his soul, and was baptized, anno 1792. To his vicious associates he now became as obnoxious as he was before agreeable. After some years, viz. in 1802, he began to preach. This gave many of the sons of Belial an opportunity to insult him. While he preached they would mock; and sometimes openly. On one occasion, they stirred up so much disturbance, that he thought it his duty to prosecute them. In

return, one man,* under some frivolous pretence, swore the peace against him, and dragged him before a magistrate, while there, he lavished out the most unlimited abuse against Fisher; when lo! he fell speechless by a paralytic stroke. He lost the use of one side, and suffered more than common pain in such cases.† This display of divine vengeance had an awful effect upon the minds of the surrounding people, and indeed all who heard it.

Mr. Fisher was upwards of forty years of age when he began to preach. It is not to be expected that under those circumstances he should make any great advancement in improving his gifts. He is esteemed, however, a man of strong mind, and as a preacher, sound and animating.

The Baptist cause is not thought to prevail as much, on the Eastern Shore, as it did some years past. When they first came into this country, they had to combat with the established church armed with the civil sword. Clothed with a heavenly panoply, they went forth in the name of the Lord of hosts, and prevailed. The established church here, as well as in most other places in Virginia, declined rapidly, after the rise of the Baptists. Of late, they have other opponents that are much more successful. For many years past, the Methodists have been a very increasing people on the Eastern Shore. Whether their prosperity is only temporary, until the set time to favour Zion shall arrive; or whether for some cause God is disposed to permit his people to be led into captivity, and to become subservient to the neighbouring nations, we cannot determine. As this state of things has occurred in many other places, as well as in these parts, it will not be improper to offer a few remarks by way of conjecturing the cause; not because it is

* A Mr. Henderson.

† This happened in 1809; and three months after, he remained in the same awful state, suffering very severe pain of body, and no doubt as much in mind.

believed that the remarks apply to this or any particular place, but with a design to offer caution to all. Baptist-principles, under right views, have no tendency to paralyze the efforts of man, or retard his activity. But how often do these effects follow the misinterpretation of these principles! How frequently, where error thrives through the industry and zeal of its supporters, do the friends of truth lie still under a mistaken confidence that truth cannot be hurt: And instead of opposing zeal to zeal, industry to industry, and all lawful means in a good cause against all lawful or unlawful ones in a bad one; they too often permit the hearts of the people to be stolen, and their prejudices set against sound principles before they take the alarm. Truth is often injured by an unsuitable application of its parts. Strong meat should not be given but to men. To preach the deep mysterious doctrines of grace upon all occasions, and before all sorts of people, is the sure way to preach them out of the parts. To give to any one doctrine more weight than the proportion found in the scripture, defaces the beauty of the whole, and retards its progress. Unguardedness respecting preachers, in various ways, but especially as to impostors, has injured the Baptists in many parts, but in none more than on the Eastern Shore. They have probably suffered more by impostors, than any other people in Virginia. The most distinguished of these was Joseph Flood. He was for eight or ten years, a Baptist preacher of great popularity in those parts, and by many was thought pious. His brilliant talents seem to have blinded the people to his faults. He had married a wife in early life, with whom he lived peaceably. She dying, he married a second; who proved a heavy curse. He left her, and employed his time altogether in preaching. For this he was not much blamed by those who knew all the circumstances. But he would not stop there. He came down into Accomack, and actually persuaded

a young woman of respectable connexions to go to Philadelphia, and there to be married to him. It is difficult for any at a distance, to conceive, what a deadly stab this gave the Baptist cause upon the Eastern Shore. Flood sent his credentials to the church, and in many respects, acted a candid part. He has since settled in Bedford county, Virginia, and has occasionally preached but not as a Baptist.

Soon after Flood's downfall, came one Samuel Counsel under the name of a Baptist preacher; and being a man of considerable ingenuity, became popular. He was indeed a wolf in sheep's clothing. He was an Arian in principle; and used great subtilty in maintaining his opinions. He was thought, by some, to have made impressions on some respectable professors; and that if his bad life had not betrayed him, he might have formed a party in the churches. The Salisbury Association noticed him, and guarded the churches against him; which with some other things, drove him off.

About the same time, came one Carey, (as he called himself) and pretended that he was a Baptist preacher. Carey was far from possessing distinguished gifts; and indeed could not be said to have any one qualification for making good his way under his assumed character, except an indescribable stock of impudence. Still, however, he imposed upon many, and was noticed in several places, as a preacher of gifts. Against him also, the churches were cautioned, and he went off elsewhere; and if not hanged, is perhaps still imposing upon the credulous somewhere.

After these repeated flams, it is not strange that the Baptist cause has rather declined of late years in this Association. But, peradventure, these dark scenes are but the preludes of a bright and glorious day, for which, no doubt many precious and pious souls are daily lifting up their hearts to God. For indeed the Baptists of these parts are a tender, loving, affectionate, and pious people, anxious for the welfare of Zion.

For hospitality and kindness to strangers, the Eastern Shore people, both saints and sinners, are surpassed by none.

This is the last association in Virginia, that can be said to have arisen from the labours of Separate Baptist ministers. We shall now proceed to treat of those formerly called Regulars.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of the Origin and Progress of the Regular Baptists.

We have already informed our readers, page 1, that one of the three original companies of Baptists, that emigrated to Virginia, came from Maryland. From these arose the Regular Baptists, as they were, for a season, called, in contradistinction to the Separates. These, though not so numerous as the Separates, are a large and very respectable body of people. For, with very few, did they come into Virginia, and now they are become several Associations. Besides the Ketocton, which is a very extensive association, the Redstone, Greenbrier, and Union, all sprung from the same source.

Our papers do not exactly agree respecting the date at which the first Baptists made their appearance in these parts, but upon a full examination of the different documents, it is probable that we shall give a correct statement.

In 1743, Edward Hays and Thomas Yates, members of a Baptist congregation in Maryland, moved with a company, and settled on Opeckon, in Berkley county, Virginia. Their minister, Mr. Henry Loveall, soon followed them. His preaching was attended with success, and in a short time he baptized fifteen persons. They continued their church state until 1751; but it is probable they were rather remiss in their government; for we are informed, that on that

year, certain minister* of the Philadelphia Association came among them, and new modelled the church, forming it, as our manuscript says, upon the Calvinistic plan, sifting out the chaff, and retaining the supposed good grain. From which it may be presumed, that the first preacher or his party, were either Arminians, or inclined that way.

In 1754, when Stearns and Marshall were among them, their minister was Samuel Heton, who was probably their first preacher, after they had been new modelled as above. What became of either Loveall or Heton, we are not informed. The next preacher that lived among them, and far the most distinguished, was elder John Garrard, probably from Pennsylvania. The precise year in which he came, is not ascertained, but it was probably about 1755. From the time that they were purified, in 1751, this church was in connexion with the Philadelphia Association. They were very zealous, had much preaching, and were remarkably warm in their religious exercises, and more particularly so after Mr. Daniel Marshall came among them. They went to such lengths, that some of the more cold-hearted lodged a complaint in the Philadelphia Association. Mr. Miller was sent to see what was the matter. When he came, he was highly delighted with the exercises, joined them cordially, and said if he had such warm hearted christians in his church, he would not take gold for them. He charged those who had complained, rather to nourish than complain of such gifts. The work of God revived among them, and considerable additions were made to the church. The country in which they had settled, was but thinly inhabited, and was subject to the inroads of the Indians. Some of these savage irruptions took place not long after Mr. Garrard had settled among them; in consequence of

* Mr. Miller and others.

which, he and many of the church removed below the Blue ridge, and resided for some time in Loudon county, on Ketocton creek. He was not, while there, forgetful of his duty, but laboured night and day for the instruction and salvation of sinners. God turned the hearts of many, who believing, were baptized.

A church was constituted, called Ketocton, to which Mr. Garrard was appointed pastor. It is probable that this church was organized in the year 1756: for on the second Sunday in June, 1757, the Millcreek, Ketocton, and the Smith's and Lynville's Creek churches, held their first yearly meeting at the meeting house of the last named church. So that we shall probably be correct if we date the constitution of the Ketocton church in 1756; of Millcreek in 1743; her first renewal in 1751 and her reinstatement after the Indian irruption in 1757. Having briefly shown the origin and process of the Baptists who first settled on Opeckon, we shall now attend to another company on Smith's and Lynville's Creek, in Rockingham. The Smith's and Lynville's Creek church was constituted August 6th, 1756, under the pastoral care of John Alderson, sen. There had been some Baptists living in this place for about eleven years previous to the constitution of the church. These were probably a party of private members from some of the churches in the Philadelphia Association; or perhaps some of them from New England: for it is stated that one John Harrison wishing to be baptized, went as far as Oyster bay in Massachusetts, to obtain that ordinance. As there were Baptist churches and ministers much nearer, the presumption is, that he had been led to that measure in consideration of some, if not all, of the Baptists of his neighbourhood having come from thence.

During the eleven years from the time the Baptists first came to this neighbourhood, until the constitu-

tion of the church, they were visited by several preachers from the northern states, among whom were Mr. Samuel Eaton, Benjamin Griffith, John Gano, and John Alderson; the last of whom afterwards settled among them and became their pastor.

The three churches above named became members of the Philadelphia Association soon after their constitution, and so continued until they formed an independent association. Previous to this however, they met in an annual or yearly meeting, alternately at the three meeting houses. In their yearly meetings, preaching was kept up for several days, ministers from distant parts attended, and consultations were holden respecting the propagation of the gospel, as well as advice offered for the good government of the infant churches. These meetings greatly accelerated the spread of the gospel, and also ripened the churches for a separate association.

About 1760, Rev. David Thomas, from Pennsylvania, came to Berkley in Virginia, on a ministerial visit. A small time previous to this, two men in the county of Fauquier, on Broadrun, had, without any public preaching, become convinced of the reality of vital religion, and that they were destitute of it. Wrought upon by such convictions, and hearing of the Baptists in Berkley, they travelled thither, a distance of about sixty miles, to hear them. When they arrived and heard the gospel, it proved a sweet favour of life. They returned home, God built them up by his spirit, and, in a short time, they made a second visit to Berkley, offered an experience of grace to the church, and were baptized. It so happened, that these men and Mr. David Thomas came to Berkley at the same time. They invited him to go down to Fauquier and preach, and he accepted the invitation. It was said of Martin Luther, that if the pope had given him a cardinal's cap, he would never have propagated the principles of the reformation. It might be so. And it could also be said, that if they

had made Paul high priest, instead of sending him to Damascus, he would not have spread the gospel among the gentiles. So also if Mr. Thomas had not happened to meet with these men, who were hungering for the bread of life, he might never have gone to Broadrun, and from thence over a great part of Virginia; by which thousands were turned from darkness to light. These things, in the eye of mere reason, look like contingencies; but by the eye of faith, they are all plainly viewed as the contrivance of infinite wisdom, and executed by an infallible, though invisible hand.

After Mr. Thomas had laboured awhile at Broadrun, and in the adjacent neighbourhood, his labours were so much favoured, that he resolved to become a resident among them. Many professed faith, and were baptized. A church was quickly constituted, to which Mr. Thomas was chosen pastor. This took place a little after the year 1760. He did not confine his ministry to one neighbourhood. He travelled through all the surrounding country, lifting up his voice as the voice of God commanding all men to repent. He was, indeed and in truth, a burning and a shining light. There were few such men in the world, as David Thomas was, at that time. Having by nature a strong and vigorous mind, he had devoted his attention with diligence to the acquirement of a classical and refined education. In this, few, if any of his contemporaries, succeeded better. He graduated at an early period. Besides the endowments of his mind, he had a melodious and piercing voice, pathetic address, expressive action, and above all, a heart filled with the love of God and sympathy for his fellow men, whom he saw overwhelmed in sin and misery. God bade him speak on; and much people believed through him.

Mr. Thomas drew the attention of the people for many miles around. They travelled, in many instances, fifty and sixty miles to hear him. It is re-

markable, that about the time of the first rise of the gospel in Virginia, there were multiplied instances of persons who had never heard any thing like evangelical preaching, that were brought through divine grace to see and feel the want of vital goodness. Many of these, when they would hear of Mr. Thomas and other Baptist preachers, would travel off to hear them and invite them to come and preach in their neighbourhood. By this means, the gospel was first carried into Culpepper. Mr. Allen Wyley,* a man of respectable standing in that county, had been thus turned to God, and not knowing of any spiritual preacher, he had, sometimes gathered his neighbours, and read the scriptures and exhorted them to repentance; but hearing after a while, of Mr. Thomas, he and some of his neighbours travelled to Fauquier to hear him. As soon as he heard him, he knew the joyful sound, submitted to baptism, and invited him to preach at his house. He came, but the opposition from the wicked was so great, that he could not preach. He went into the county of Orange, and preached several times and to much purpose. His labours were blessed. Having however, urgent calls to preach in various other places, and being much opposed and persecuted here, he did not attend here as often as was wished. On this account it was, that Mr. Wyley went to Pittsylvania for Mr. Harris. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Garrard, sometimes together and sometimes apart, travelled and propagated the pure principles of christianity in all the upper counties of the Northern Neck. Mr. Thomas was far the most active. It was not to be presumed that the friends of the establishment would feel themselves disinterested in these proceedings. Their Dagon was fast falling before the gospel. They therefore resolved to stir themselves, to prevent this calamity. They adopted various methods to accomplish

* The same who went after Samuel Harris, see page 7.

this object. The clergy often attacked the Baptists from the pulpit; called them false prophets, wolves in sheeps' clothing, &c. &c. But, unfortunately for them, the Baptists retorted these charges by professing to believe their own articles; at least the leading ones; and charged them with denying them; a charge which they could easily substantiate. For the doctrines most complained of as advanced by the Baptists, were obviously laid down in the common prayer book.

When they could not succeed by arguments, they adopted more violent measures.

Sometimes when the preachers came to a place for the purpose of preaching, a kind of mob would be raised, and by violent threats they hindered the preaching.

Sometimes the preachers, and even some, that only read sermons and prayed publicly, were carried before magistrates, and though not committed to prison, were sharply reprimanded, and cautioned not to be righteous overmuch.

In one instance only, it appears that any person in these parts was actually imprisoned on account of religion. He it seems, was a licensed exhorter, and was arrested for exhorting at a licensed meeting house. The magistrate sent him to jail, where he was kept until court; but the court upon knowing the circumstances, discharged him. Elder James Ireland was also imprisoned in Culpepper jail, and in other respects treated very ill.* But at the time of his imprisonment Mr. Ireland was a Separate Baptist, though he afterwards joined the Regulars. The reasons why the Regular Baptists were not as much persecuted as the Separates, was, that they had, at an early date, applied to the general court, and obtained licenses for particular places; under the toleration law of England; but few of their enemies knew the extent of these licenses; most supposing, that they were,

* See farther account of his persecutions in his biography.

by them, authorized to preach any where in the county. One other reason for their moderate persecution perhaps was, that the Regulars were not thought so enthusiastic as the Separates; and having Mr. Thomas, a learned man, in their society, they appeared much more respectable in the eyes of the enemies of truth.

All their pretensions combined with their other exertions, could not materially retard the progress of the gospel. The work went on. New churches were constituted and young preachers were raised up. Of these, none were more distinguished than Richard Major, although he had past the meridian of life before he embarked in the ministry. He seems to have made such good use of his time, that he did more in the vineyard than many who had toiled all the day.* Daniel and William Fristoe, Jeremiah Moore, and others, were early fruits of elder Thomas's ministry. These young heralds, uniting their endeavours with those of the more experienced, greatly accelerated the progress of the gospel. The Separates also, in the more southern parts of the state, were carrying on a similar work. These fires met in Orange county, in the year 1767, as we have already related in another place. Jealousies arising between them, from some cause, produced the unhappy divisions which continued so long to disturb their peace. The breach was never very wide between them; not so wide but they often met in conferences, as fellow sufferers, and united their councils to contrive plans for their mutual emancipation from ecclesiastical tyranny. Before the year 1770, the Regular Baptists were spread over the whole country, in the Northern Neck above Fredericksburg. Between 1770 and 1780, their cords still continued to be lengthened. Mr Lunsford, a young but extraordinary preacher, carried the tidings of peace

* See his biography.

downwards, and planted the Redeemer's standard in those counties of the Northern Neck which are below Fredericksburg. Messrs. Corbley, Sutton, and Barnet had moved over the Alleghany, and had raised up several churches in the north west counties, as early as 1775. Mr. John Alderson had gone in 1777, to Greenbrier, and in a few years raised up a people for God in that region. Besides these, there were some others who moved more southward, and raised up a few churches. During the time of the great declension in Virginia, the Regulars were under the cloud as well as their brethren the Separates; and they also participated in the great revival. In the year 1782, only twenty three were baptized in the whole of the churches, in the Kotocton Association; whereas, in 1789, after the commencement of the great revival, the returns from the different churches amounted to three hundred and fifty nine. Since the great revival, the Baptist cause has considerably declined in most parts of the Kotocton Association. Mr. Fristoe, in his history of this association, observes, "that very few young ministers have been raised up of late; and that the number of members have much decreased." The decrease is certainly not universal; there are some flourishing churches within the district. As the Baptists have decreased, the Methodists in many places have increased. It is not so easy to account for this change. Does it arise from the Arminian doctrine being more palatable to the self-righteous heart of man? Or have they been more industrious in propagating their doctrines? Or have they succeeded, as in some other places, in driving the Baptist preachers, imperceptibly, to dwell too much upon high Calvinistic points, to the neglect of the more simple, but more important principles of christianity? If we were to calculate principles according to the weight of talents by which they are supported, Baptist principles ought to prevail within the Kotocton Association as much as in any sec-

tion of Virginia, if not more. The talents of the leading preachers in those parts, stand in the first row. After all is said, the adversity or prosperity of religion, in any place, is often wrapped in mystery too dark to be penetrated by mortal vision. The ways of God are past finding out. It is not impossible, before this generation passeth away, that the son of man may come in power and demonstration of his spirit, for the salvation of thousands, and quickly place his people above all competition.

Having thus given a general account of the rise and progress of the Regular Baptists, we shall now proceed to furnish details respecting their proceedings in associations and churches.

TABLE OF KETOCTON ASSOCIATION.

| <i>Names of Churches.</i> | <i>Year of joining Churches.</i> | <i>Number at joining.</i> | <i>Present Number.</i> | <i>By whom planted.</i> | <i>Former Pastors.</i> | <i>Present Pastors.</i> | <i>Counties.</i> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Ketocton | 1766 | | 29 | J. Garrard | J. Garrard J. Marks | W. Gilmore | Loudon |
| Little River | 1769 | 81 | 75 | D. Thomas | R. Major J. Hickerfon | R. Latham | do |
| New Valley | 1767 | 30 | 30 | J. Thomas | J. Thomas W. Thrift | W. Gilmore | do |
| Goole Creek | 1775 | 37 | 76 | | | none | do |
| Leeburg | 1803 | 27 | 40 | W. Thrift | W. Thrift | none | do |
| Ebenezer | 1804 | 19 | 49 | W. Fristoe | W. Fristoe | W. Fristoe | do |
| N. Fork | 1787 | 30 | 57 | | A. Weeks | W. Gilmore | do |
| Alexandria | 1803 | 25 | 47 | J. Moore | J. Moore | J. Moore | Fairfax |
| Frying Pan | 1791 | 67 | 45 | R. Major | R. Major | J. Moore | do |
| Bull Run | 1775 | 126 | 65 | R. Major | R. Major T. Bridges | none | do |
| <i>Difficult</i> | 1775 | 75 | | | <i>J. Moore</i> | | do |
| <i>Popeshead</i> | 1775 | 121 | | <i>R. Major</i> | <i>R. Major</i> | | do |
| Occoquon | 1776 | 57 | 69 | D. Thomas | D. Thomas | P. Spiller | Prince William |
| Chappawamick | 1767 | | 100 | D. Thomas | W. Fristoe | W. Grinstead | Stafford |
| Whiteoak | 1791 | 76 | 95 | W. Fristoe | A. Leach | H. Pitman | do |
| Hartwood | 1771 | 75 | 99 | | W. Fristoe J. Hickerfon | E. Abel | do |
| Broad Run | 1766 | | 63 | D. Thomas | D. Thomas | W. Fristoe | Fauquier |
| Thumb Run | 1772 | 22 | 104 | W. Fristoe | | R. Latham | do |
| Brent Town | 1773 | 95 | 36 | D. Fristoe | D. Fristoe | none | do |
| <i>Upper Carter's Run</i> | 1784 | 50 | 23 | <i>J. Munroe</i> | <i>J. Munroe</i> | none | do |
| Long Branch | 1786 | 25 | 53 | J. Munroe | J. Munroe | W. Grinstead | do |
| Back Lick | 1782 | 46 | 97 | H. Hagan | H. Hagan J. Moore | none | do and Fairfax |
| Hedgeman's River | 1791 | 100 | 100 | J. Hickerfon | J. Hickerfon | none | do and Culpepper |
| South River | 1783 | 21 | 20 | J. Ireland | J. Ireland J. Price | W. Northerr S. O'Hendren | Shenandoah |
| Water Lick | 1787 | 29 | 52 | J. Price J. Ireland | J. Ireland W. Marshall | | do |
| Happy Creek | 1783 | 64 | 72 | R. Major W. Marshall | J. Taylor J. Price J. Ireland | B. Dawson | Fredrick |
| Ethel | 1808 | 17 | 53 | J. Ireland | S. O'Hindren | S. O'Hendren | do |

TABLE OF KETOCTON ASSOCIATION.
Concluded.

| Names of Churches | Year of joining Churches | Number at joining | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Buck Marsh | 1772 | 56 | 297 | W. and D. Fritoe | J. Garrard R. Major J. Ireland C. Collins | W. Fritoe | Frederick |
| Zoar | 1799 | 19 | 44 | C. Collins | C. Collins | F. Moore | Jefferson |
| Millcreek | 1766 | | 38 | H. Loveall & — Miller | H. Loveall S. Hetton J. Garrard D. Thomas | J. Hutchinson son | Berkley |
| Timber Ridge | 1809 | 7 | 7 | J. Hutchinson | J. Hutchinson | J. Hutchinson | do |
| N. River | 1787 | 26 | 27 | B. Stone | B. Stone | J. Munroe | Hampshire |
| Crooked Run | 1790 | 44 | 50 | | B. Stone | J. Munroe | do |
| Patter- ion's Creek | 1808 | 16 | 17 | J. Munroe | J. Munroe | J. Munroe | do |
| Nanjemoy | 1793 | 63 | 50 | A. Leach | A. Leach | A. Leach | state of Maryland |

N. B. The churches in Italicks, appeared on the minutes of the association for many years, and for several years of late, have disappeared; from which it is probable, that they are either dissolved or have changed their names. All the churches found in the minutes of 1809, are inserted, except Upper Goose Creek, which had lately joined Ketocton, and which had been previously inserted in the table of the Culpepper Association.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Proceedings of the Ketocton Association, from their first Constitution until this Date.

It has been already shown, that the first Regular Baptist churches in Virginia were united to the Philadelphia Association; but held yearly meetings among themselves, in which many things were attended to, such as are commonly done at associations, and by which they were ripened for independence. In 1765, they were dismissed from the Philadelphia Association; and on the 19th of August, 1766, they met by their delegates at Ketocton, in Loudon. Their first

meeting being at Ketocton, the association took that name. There were only four churches of this order in Virginia; all of whom were represented by their delegates as follow :

Ketocton, John Marks, John Loyd.

Smith's and Lynville's Creek, John Alderson.

Millcreek, John Garrard, Isaac Sutton.

Broadrun, David Thomas, Joseph J. Metcalf.

The minutes of this association say nothing of their appointment for moderator or clerk, nor of their numbers, nor of their regulations of any kind, except a resolution to send to the Philadelphia Association for instructions with regard to this association. By which they probably meant such rules and regulations as had been, or should be advised by the mother association. An affectionate and exhortatory circular letter was connected to the minutes.

The business transacted in the Ketocton, is so analogous to that of the other associations already commented on, that it is quite unnecessary to detail; we shall therefore, in a kind of table, represent the times and places, &c. of holding the associations, and then make some few general remarks upon the whole.

The first meeting of the Ketocton Association included the third Sunday in August as one of the days on which they were together. This has continued ever since. The day of assembling has been changed from Saturday to Friday, and from Friday to Thursday; which last has continued for many years. Thursday and Friday are devoted to the business of the association, Saturday and Sunday to preaching and public ministrations. Until 1770, neither the number baptized nor the totals are minuted. In a few subsequent years also they are omitted.

*Table of the Times and Places &c. of holding the
Ketocton Association.*

| <i>Years.</i> | <i>Places of meeting.</i> | <i>Number baptized</i> | <i>Total.</i> | <i>No. of corres- ponding Churches.</i> |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| 1766 | Ketocton | | | 4 |
| 7 | Mill Creek | | | 6 |
| 8 | Smith's Creek | | | 6 |
| 9 | Broad Run | | | 3 |
| 1770 | Chappawamick | 209 | 624 | 10 |
| 1 | New Valley | 275 | 912 | 10 |
| 2 | Mountain Creek | | | 13 |
| 3 | Little River | 270 | 1050 | 17 |
| 4 | Brent Town | | | |
| 5 | Buck Marsh | 142 | 1349 | 23 |
| 6 | Mount Poney | 82 | 1341 | 20 |
| 7 | Popeshead | 59 | 1322 | |
| 8 | Chappawamick | 14 | 836 | 15 |
| 9 | Broad Run | 41 | 1059 | 17 |
| 1780 | Bull Run | 57 | 1154 | 19 |
| 1 | Seneca | 58 | 1037 | 17 |
| 2 | Mill Creek | 23 | 1035 | 20 |
| 3 | Ketocton | 38 | 1007 | 21 |
| 4 | Brent Town | 33 | 1141 | 22 |
| 5 | Water Lick | 31 | 948 | 23 |
| 6 | Goose Creek | 21 | 624 | 14 |
| 7 | Chappawamick | 79 | 995 | 26 |
| 8 | Buck Marsh | 168 | 1141 | 28 |
| 9 | Broad Run | 359 | 1372 | 26 |
| Oct. | | | | |
| 1789 | Water Lick | 12 | 486 | 10 |
| 1790 | Goose Creek | 21 | 624 | 14 |
| 1 | Opeckon | 55 | 667 | 15 |
| 2 | Long Branch | 294 | 2005 | 29 |
| 3 | Water Lick | 138 | 2187 | 34 |
| 4 | Little River | 32 | 2017 | 31 |
| 5 | Goose Creek | 39 | 1898 | 31 |
| 6 | Thumb Run | 38 | 1882 | 33 |
| 7 | Frying Pan | 48 | 1820 | 32 |
| 8 | Broad Run | 90 | 1846 | 32 |
| 9 | Grove | 63 | 1786 | 31 |
| 1800 | Back Lick | 35 | 1719 | 32 |
| 1 | Happy Creek | 102 | 1780 | 31 |
| 2 | Little River | 216 | 1901 | 30 |
| 3 | Buck Marsh | 355 | 1853 | 31 |
| 4 | Broad Run | 143 | 1831 | 31 |
| 5 | Thumb Run | 94 | 1598 | 25 |
| 6 | Frying Pan | 126 | 2005 | 31 |
| 7 | Opeckon | 64 | | |
| 8 | Ebenezer | 185 | 2004 | 28 |
| 9 | New Valley | 153 | 2036 | 31 |

In 1789, the Ketocton Association was divided into two, by a line running from the Potomac a south course. The district above this line retained the name Ketocton, the other was called Chapawamsick. The districts met separately until 1792, when they again united. Some attempts at a division have since been made, but have not succeeded.

For more than twenty years after the association was organized, the custom of laying on hands upon all persons immediately after they were baptized, was invariably practised in this association. It was an article in their confession of faith, and the want of it, was deemed by many a bar to communion. After the great revival, first the necessity, and then the propriety of it, began to be questioned, until it was finally disused; and in the revival of the confession of faith that article was expunged.

In 1791, a case was brought before the association which produced considerable agitation. James Hutchinson, who was born in New Jersey, but raised in Loudon county, Virginia, had gone to Georgia, and there first became a Methodist and then a Baptist preacher. Previous to his joining the Baptists he had been baptized by a Methodist preacher. When he offered to join the Baptists of Georgia, it was made a question whether his baptism, being performed by an unbaptized person, was valid. The Georgia Baptists decided that it was valid.

In the year above mentioned, Mr. Hutchinson came to Virginia to see his relations in Loudon county. While he was there, his preaching became effectual to the conversion of many. Mr. Hutchinson baptized them. These things stirred up the question in the Ketocton Association, whether the baptism of Hutchinson and his new disciples, was valid. The decision here, was just the reverse of the decision in Georgia. They determined not to receive either him or those baptized by him, unless they would submit to be rebaptized. After some time they consented,

and the ordinance was readministered. Their proceeding on this occasion, was more strict than that of any other association upon the same subject. The question has been before most of the associations, at one time or other ; and in every other instance they either deemed it unnecessary to rebaptize, or left it to the conscience of the party to be rebaptized or not. The arguments were: That the most important prerequisite to baptism was faith in the subject. That, although it was expedient to have a fixed rule for qualifying persons for the administration of the ordinances, yet the want of such qualifications in the administrator, ought not to be viewed as having sufficient weight to invalidate the baptism. On the other hand it was argued: that if such baptism was sanctioned, every thing like ordination might be dispensed with: That, ordination was not only expedient, but an institution of the bible, and therefore indispensable: That such proceedings, if allowed, might go to great lengths, and, ultimately, produce confusion.

About the same time the association was consulted as to the propriety of a church's requiring of each of her members to contribute to the expenses of the church according to their property. The association determined that a regulation of that kind in a church was lawful, and that persons that would not submit to it deserved to be excluded from the privileges of the church. It was easy for the church to ask, and for the association to give her advice ; the correctness of which cannot be doubted upon right principles. But it was not quite so easy to execute. The attempt was made in some of the churches, but in consequence of the violent opposition it met with, they desisted from it.

In 1787, the lawfulness of hereditary slavery was debated in this association. They determined that hereditary slavery was a breach of the divine law. They then appointed a committee to bring in a plan of gradual emancipation ; which was accordingly

done. They were treading upon delicate ground. It excited considerable tumult in the churches; and accordingly, in their letters to the next association, they remonstrated so decidedly, that the association resolved to take no farther steps in the business.

The association took up the subject of the General Meeting of Correspondence, at different periods; but in every instance decided against encouraging it. There are however, within the limits of the district, a very respectable party who are favourable to the institution of the General Meeting; and it is hoped, that at no very distant day, the whole association will discover how requisite such a meeting is, towards preserving peace and uniformity, among a great people.

The office of moderator has been discharged by Messrs. Fristoe, Moore, and Munroe, alternately; each of whom seems to possess the qualifications requisite to fill the chair with dignity and skill.

Their standing clerk, for many years, has been Mr. Thomas Buck. It is not presumable they will want any other, as long as he is willing and able to act.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Historical Sketches of the Churches in the Ketocton Association.

KETOCTON.

Of the origin of this mother church some account has been already given in the general history of the Regular Baptists. After Mr. Garrard had removed to Millcreek, the care of the church fell to elder John Marks. From the time that their numbers first appear on the minutes, until the present day, there has been very little variation. From which we infer, that their course has been even and smooth.

Elder J. Marks, mentioned above, moved from

Pennsylvania into Virginia, either with Mr Garrard or about the same time. He was rather at an advanced stage of life when he came; but settling in a healthy country, and being very temperate and regular in his life, he lived to be very old. He died about the year 1786; having from first to last maintained a spotless reputation for piety and steadiness.

As a preacher, he was sound and sensible, yet cold and phlegmatic. Being a poor man and obliged to labour for his support, his ministerial services were confined within a small circle. To this circumstance, added to his cold and dry method, may be ascribed his not being more successful. For some years, this mother church was without any regular pastor. Mr. William Gilmore, a warm and active preacher from Maryland, having lately settled within the limits of a neighbouring church, has consented to attend them statedly.

LITTLE RIVER

Was some of the early fruits of Rev D. Thomas's ministry in Virginia. In this work, however, he was powerfully aided by Rev. Richard Major, their first pastor. For although the first seed were sown by Mr. Thomas, yet Mr. Major watered and nourished the plants until he brought them to perfection. So rapidly did the gospel spread in this church, that just two years after they were constituted, they were the most numerous church in the association; having two hundred and seventy two members. Her branches, however, extended into the neighbouring parts. When any of these branches became sufficiently numerous, they were constituted into new churches; by which, the mother church was reduced in numbers. During Mr. Major's life, they were a happy and united people, greatly attached to their minister. After his death, they were without any regular pastor for some years. Lately, they have

chosen Rev. Robert Latham as their pastor, who is a man of gifts, and who *neglects not the gifts that are in him.*

NEW VALLEY

Was formed partly by emigrants from Pennsylvania, and partly by converts in Virginia. Their first pastor moved from Great Valley, in Pennsylvania, and settling here, took the care of this church. He was not much distinguished; and the church seems to have trodden in his steps, as to her religious prosperity. She was represented by her pastor in the associations, until 1778. After that time, her name appears no more upon the minutes until 1793, and then she has only thirteen members. For eight or ten years after this, they seem still to have been a declining people; but for four or five years past, they appear to be looking up. Mr. Gilmore's labours here, as well as in most of the places where he preaches, seem to be attended by a divine blessing.

GOOSE CREEK.

This church exhibits proof how much good may be done by active and intelligent private members; who, like Aquila and Priscilla, are willing to be *helpers in Christ Jesus*. It does not appear, during the thirty five years they have been acting as a church, that they ever had any regular pastor; and yet there are few churches in the association whose course has been more prosperous.*

LEESBURG AND EBENEZER.

These are young churches that have not been dis-

* The compiler thinks it worthy of note, that in his frequent and diligent researches of the minutes of the association, he has not observed a single session in which this church has not been represented. He has not been informed of her internal order; but he infers from what he has learned, that she is at home as well as abroad, a dutiful and obedient daughter of Salem.

tinguished for any thing very remarkable. Neither of them at present have any resident pastor. Ebenezer has however the stated services of William Fris-
toe. Leesburg is frequently visited by Jeremiah Moore. These old, faithful, and laborious servants of the most high God, through the scarcity of preachers, are under the necessity of serving several congregations besides those in which they are residents.

NORTH FORK.

This church was once under the care of elder Alderson Weeks,* a preacher of acceptance and usefulness. Of late, elder William Gilmore has become their pastor; and under his ministry God has granted them a precious revival. Returns of twenty six baptized, were made to the last association, and the work was still going on. Mr. Gilmore is spoken of as a young preacher of good talents, and who is willing also to occupy them.*

ALEXANDRIA,

In the city of that name, though not a large, is a respectable church. They are the fruits of elder Moore's ministerial labours, and with whom they are a very favourite people; while they on their part, reciprocate his tender regard. What more glorious sight on earth, than a pious and affectionate people receiving the tidings of peace and salvation, from pious, animating, and affectionate ministers? The Methodists have taken the lead of late years, in Alexandria: indeed, in most of the large towns in Virginia, they have greatly out-stripped the other christian sects. Whether their government being more energetic than that of the Baptists, is on that account better adapted to the disorderly habits of a town; or whether their frequent change of preachers tends to

* Mr. Weeks, the first pastor of this church, moved to Bedford, and there has the care of a church. We presume it is the same man.

gratify that taste, which, (like that of the Athenians), prompts them *to tell or to hear some new thing*; or whether, having influence with their preachers, they station their best ones in populous cities, (which is not the case with the Baptists); cannot be easily decided. The friends of the Baptists, in some places, hope, that at no distant day, the scene will be changed.

FRYING PAN

Has been a larger church than it is at present. Many of the members moving to other parts, and there being little or no revival to fill up the vacancies, they have for some years had rather discouraging prospects.

Elder Jeremiah Moore, their present pastor, is about sixty four years of age. He was born 7th of June, 1746, in the county of Prince William, of parents in the middle rank of life, and raised in the Protestant Episcopal church. At about seventeen years of age, he heard Rev. David Thomas preach; by which his thoughts were turned upon sacred things. He had never given into the daring vices of the age, but was rather virtuously inclined, having from a very early period, had some legal notions of religion. His convictions were extremely pungent, and lasted a considerable length of time. At last a revelation of the Redeemer's fullness to save the greatest of sinners, was made to his mind, and he rejoiced in the hope of his glory. His first profession of grace, was in the year 1772, and he soon was baptized.

Mr. Moore is not only a preacher but a writer. He published a few years since, two or three treatises in defence of his principles; in which very considerable ingenuity is displayed.

His call to the ministry has something worthy of note. His mind being previously much agitated between his impressions to preach, and his apprehensions of unworthiness, God decided his doubts, by impressing upon his mind, in a distinguished manner,

these words : “ *Neglect not the gift that is in thee ;* ” followed quickly by these : “ *Study to show thyself approved a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.* ” After this, he commenced preaching, fully persuaded, weak as he felt himself, that God had called him. Persecution and affliction are said to be proof of a minister’s call. Mr. Moore soon had this proof. In 1773, while he was preaching in the bounds of the church called Difficult, a magistrate attended by the rector of the parish, had him arrested by a constable and ordered to prison. His mittimus was written in these remarkable words : “ I send you herewith the body of Jeremiah Moore, who is a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and also a stroller,” &c. This was somewhat similar to Pilate’s inscribing over the cross of Christ, “ *Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews.* ” Mr. Moore escaped this imprisonment by obtaining legal license for places of preaching.

At another time, a lawless mob, headed by two magistrates seized Mr. Moore, and another preacher that was with him, and carried them off to duck them. After they had ducked Mr. Moore’s companion, they discharged them both. These, added to the scoffs and ignominious reproaches unjustly thrown upon him, were a part of his early sufferings in his Master’s service. It is now little less than forty years since he began to preach, during all which time he has laboured with increasing diligence.*

In point of talents Mr. Moore certainly stands in the front row of Virginia preachers. His person and voice are extremely advantageous ; his style is strong and energetic, and indeed elegant ; especially as he had not the advantages of a refined education ; his ideas are brilliant, and really flow upon him so abundantly, that by some of his friends it has been

* In 1795, Mr. Moore preached, at a General Committee, in Louisa, where the compiler heard him observe, that he had travelled and preached distances sufficient to reach twice round the world. He has lost no time since that.

thought rather a hurt, as it prevented him from making so clear an arrangement as he might otherwise do. He is well versed in the scriptures; and without doubt, often gives lucid explanations of mysterious texts. His system is high Calvinism, which he preaches with great ingenuity: and indeed, some of his warmest friends are of opinion, that his talents and temper tending that way, has sometimes prompted him to enter unseasonably upon the mysterious points in that system; and, thereby to deal out to weak stomachs, meats too strong for their digestion. His talent for pulpit satire, is probably equal to any man's in Virginia. This he is thought, sometimes, to throw out rather too lavishly upon his opponents. Solomon says, *Though you bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.* If that be correct, then it is better sometimes, *not to answer a fool according to his folly.*

Finally, admitting these inaccuracies, yet it is doubtful whether any preacher in Virginia has run a more honourable course than Mr. Moore; honourable to his God, honourable to himself, and honourable to his people. His age foretells, that the crown of glory will not await him much longer.

BULL RUN

Has been a more numerous church than at present. When the gospel was carried here by the admirable and amiable Richard Major, a great revival of religion arose; so that in a little time a church was constituted, having one hundred and twenty six members. From the constitution of new churches, &c. their number had become somewhat reduced, until about 1792, they had the smiles of heaven, and large additions were made. Not many less than a hundred were baptized; by which this church rose to higher prosperity than she had ever previously enjoyed. After the loss of Mr. Major, they employed Thomas Bridges as their preacher. His conduct while among them,

was approved of, as far as it was known ; inſomuch, that when he left them, they gave him a letter of commendation. It was after he left them, that his nefarious practices were made manifeſt.*

DIFFICULT AND POPESHEAD

Were once large and increaſing churches, being the mother of many pious and uſeful members ; many of whom moved off to the weſtern country. See the note under the Ketocton table.

OCCOQUON

Is the only church wholly in Prince William county. She was raiſed under the miniſtry of David Thomas, and had him as their paſtor for ſome time. Their preſent paſtor is elder Philip Spiller, a preacher who confines his labours chiefly to his own vicinity. His church has rather increaſed, of late years.

CHAPPAWAMSICK.

This church has been much diſtinguiſhed among her ſiſter churches, in the Ketocton Aſſociation. From her, have been conſtituted ſeveral of the neighbouring churches ; and in her, were raiſed ſome of the moſt eminent miniſters of the goſpel, that have ever appeared in the aſſociation. William and Daniel Friſtoe, Jeremiah Moore, and William Grinſtead, are all ſons of Chappawamſick.

When Mr. Thomas firſt began to preach in theſe parts, he met with violent oppoſition. Public worſhip was ſometimes prevented by the enemies of religion. To pleaſe God is to offend the devil. Satan felt his throne ſhake, and was determined to prop it with the pillars of darkneſs. Perſecution, ſcoffs, re-

* Of late, the compiler has had an opportunity of frequently ſeeing Bridges in the penitentiary. He profeſſes to have repented, and to hope that he has obtained pardon of God for all his crimes. His keepers and fellow priſoners ſay that he has greatly reformed.

proaches, false reports, &c. were tried; but all in vain. They fell before the gospel, as the walls of Jericho fell before the blowing of the rams' horns. Mr. Thomas sowed the first seed; which were watered by his ministerial sons William and Daniel Fristoe, and in a few years, by Mr. Moore also. So rapidly did the word increase among them, that in 1770, three years after the constitution, they had one hundred and seventy six members. And the following year, after dismissing thirty six members to form the Potomac church, they had remaining two hundred and twelve. The next year dismissing ninety seven at once, to form Brent Town church, they were reduced to 116. From this period, Chappawamsick gradually declined for many years. William Fristoe had fallen into Potomac, and Daniel into Brent Town; so that the mother church was rather destitute. About 1786, William Fristoe returned and continued among them for many years. In the great revival, about 1791 and 1792, this church arose from the dust and put on her garments of praise. Her number from being very small, increased to nearly a hundred: after the revival subsided, another winter succeeded. Times grew so discouraging, that Mr. Fristoe had serious fears that God had removed the candlestick, and that he would no more be gracious to the people of this vicinity. With these impressions, he moved some distance up the country. This took place about 1801 or 1802. A few years previous to Mr. Fristoe's removal, Mr. William Grinstead had been baptized. Mr. Fristoe's dejected feelings were caught by Mr. Grinstead. He was filled with anxiety. At length he felt impressions to look out for a remedy. He himself began to exhort; and from that to preach. God smiled; his labours were blessed; and more than sixty added to the church. "God works in a mysterious way." Had Mr. Fristoe continued, Mr. Grinstead according to human views, might not have become

a preacher. Under elder Grinstead's ministry, they have been a happy people. Mr. Grinstead is a popular preacher, of pleasing manners, and extensive gifts.

Elder William Fristoe, though a considerable distance off, is still a member of Chappawamsick. He was born about 1748, in the county of Stafford. At a very early period of life, he heard the gospel from the mouth of David Thomas. He became seriously impressed, and strove to do many things in a legal way, to obtain divine favour. When every refuge failed, he cast his care upon Christ; and found in him a rich supply of pardoning, saving love. Although but a mere youth, he felt impressions to preach; and accordingly, at about nineteen years of age, he began to appear in public for that sacred purpose. He demeaned himself with so much gravity and prudence, that *no man could despise his youth*. As he grew older, he extended his labours to more distant parts, Wherever he went, his preaching was more or less effectual in the salvation of sinners. Some of the most eminent preachers in Virginia, owned him as their spiritual father. Lunsford, Mason, Hickerson, with several others, received the tidings of peace from his lips. In 1774, when about twenty six years of age, he was chosen moderator to the association, although all the older preachers were present. From that time, he often discharged the duties of that office. His zeal, like a lamp fed by inexhaustible stores of oil, has never been extinguished; indeed, has seldom burnt dim. Forty three years of *weariness and painfulness* have not yet made him *weary in well doing*. His infirmities of body, for many years, have been constant; yet, maugre all, he travels almost incessantly, and deals out the food of life to the hungry flocks. He attends three or four different congregations statedly; and these at a considerable distance from each other.

In the pulpit, though not versed in the learning of the schools, he displays abilities, which many doctors of divinity have not attained. His language, though plain, is strong and nervous. His manner is solemn, as one having authority. He is a strong Calvinist in his principles, and preaches them full as much as is proper. Mr. Fristoe's age and infirmities indicate that he will be sent for ere long, to receive his reward.

Mr. Fristoe, by the appointment, or rather, at the request of the Ketocton Association, undertook to write her history. His book came out in the year 1809.

WHITE-OAK

Appears first on the minutes of the association, in the year 1791, having been taken off from Hartwood, and constituted under the care of Andrew Leach. He continued pastor for many years, during which, they had many trials as well as comforts. A few years past, he removed to Nanjemoy, in Maryland. Since his removal, they have obtained the ministerial attention of elder Hipkins Pitman, a resident within the bounds of Goshen Association; in consequence of which, they were dismissed in 1809, to join the Goshen. They have had a small revival of late.

HARTWOOD.

This church was formerly called Potomac, but in 1785, changed its name to Hartwood. They were under the care of elder William Fristoe. Mr. Fristoe remarks in his history of the Ketocton Association, that "the weakness of her members in common, was such, that she was scarcely ever able to direct her own discipline: yet out of her arose a number of useful, and some very eminent gifts, viz. Lunsford, Mason, Hickerson, and several others that are less known abroad." Mr. Fristoe was their minis-

ter for several years, during which time the above preachers were raised up. After he ceased to act as pastor, they obtained the ministerial services of elder John Hickerfon.

Since his death Ephraim Abel attends them in the character of pastor.

In this church arose James Garrard, late governor of Kentucky. While in Virginia, he was distinguished by his fellow citizens, and elected to the assembly and to military appointments. After he moved to Kentucky, he began to preach, and was thought to possess talents for the pulpit. He continued to preach until he was made governor. For the honours of men, he resigned the office of God. He relinquished the clerical robe, for the more splendid mantle of human power. The prophet says to Aha, "if ye forsake God he will forsake you." It is not strange, that colonel Garrard, after such a course, should fall into many foolish and hurtful snares. While governor, he had for his secretary H. Toulmin, said to be a transatlantic Socinian preacher, but a man of talents. Through this man, report says, governor Garrard fell into the Arian or Socinian scheme. Through the governor, many others were corrupted; until a serious and distressing schism took place.* So it remains at this time. It is due to governor Garrard to say, that his conduct has been orderly, and indeed gentlemanly; and that he has honoured every other character which he has ever assumed, except the one, which of all others, he ought to have valued.

BROAD RUN.

The origin of this church is treated of in our general history of the Regular Baptists. Since that time

* Let it be tried a thousand times, and in nine hundred and ninety nine cases it will be found, that preachers who aim at worldly honours, will be completely ruined, or greatly depreciated as preachers.

their course has been regular and steady. They have not, for many years, had any resident pastor; yet they were attended statedly, for a length of time, by elder William Fristoe. They are blessed with a number of valuable private members, whose actions say, that their right hand shall forget her cunning before they forget Jerusalem. They are not so numerous as in the days of their youth.

THUMB RUN

Was planted by the labours of Mr. William Fristoe, who continued to attend them monthly for a long time, although he lived at the distance of forty miles. For many years the church dwindled, until they were almost reduced to nothing: but being revived in a small degree, about 1802, they grew to about fifty members. A few years past they had another comfortable revival; by which they have arisen to their present state. It does not appear, that they have ever had any regular pastor, but have been visited by the preachers of the adjacent churches. They have some zealous and active private members. The labours of Mr. Latham, who is at present their occasional pastor, have been blessed among them.

BRENT TOWN.

This church was stricken off from Chappawam-sick, under, the pastoral care of the indefatigable Daniel Fristoe. They were a very happy and united people during the time of Mr. Fristoe's continuance among them, By his death, they sustained an almost irreparable loss. They have since passed through many perplexing scenes at different times; and have also enjoyed some heavenly seasons. Their state may be said to have been, rather a declining one.

UPPER CARTER'S RUN

Was once a tolerably prosperous church; but by the removal of her pastor, with some other causes,

she declined ; until she has disappeared from the minutes of the association.*

LONG BRANCH

Was formerly under the care of elder John Munroe. Their course has not been marked by any thing singular. Elder William Grinstead is their present minister, though living at some distance from them.

BACK LICK

Was first called Accotink, but assumed her present name about 1792. She was made up of members taken off from Popeshead and Difficult churches. Her first minister was Henry Hagan, a preacher of some distinction. He died about 1793. Mr. Moore then preached for them for some time. Of late, they have had no stated ministry. They have had, at different times, some pleasant revivals, and may be said to be a church of very respectable standing.

HEDGEMAN's RIVER.

This church lies upon the borders of Fauquier and Culpepper. The members of which she was first composed, were dismissed from Hartwood, for that purpose, anno 1791. They had Rev. John Hickerson for their preacher, from the time of their constitution, until he died. Since his death, they have had no stated preacher. They have been a flourishing church.

Elder John Hickerson was born in Fauquier. His father, Nathaniel Hickerson, is still living. John professed to know the joyful sound, when quite a young man. The following is a short representation of him given by Rev. Jeremiah Moore who was his friend and intimate. " Brother Hickerson was eminent for piety, zeal, and laboriousness, in the work of the ministry. He never lost sight of the precious

* See note under the table.

doctrines of rich and sovereign grace. Few, very few have made equal progress in divine knowledge, who stood on the same ground with him. He died suddenly of a cramp in the stomach, at Leesburg Virginia, on Saturday, the 28th of January, 1809.

His remains were conveyed to his mournful family, and interred, on Monday following." The following verses were composed by Mr. Moore, in honour of his memory.

- 1 Hark, Hark! what awful tidings roar!
What strains of grief we hear;
The mighty herald is no more,
And Zion drops the tear.
- 2 In mournful accents she complains.
Ah, must the mighty fall!
And Death, the tyrant, ever reign,
The grave consume us all?
- 3 Must prophets and apostles die,
And faints for ever weep;
Must useful gifts and virtue lie
In death's eternal sleep?
- 4 No! Faith forbids these mournful sighs,
And dries the flowing tear;
Sees faints from sleeping tombs arise,
And the great Judge appear.
- 5 Then shall the herald quit the tomb
With shouts to sovereign Grace.
The day of full reward is come,
And faints must take their place.
- 6 At Christ's right hand, his bride appears,
From sin and death released;
Her eyes are washed from grief and tears,
Her soul is filled with peace.
- 7 Eternally his faints shall sing
His praise, in lofty strains;
And heaven, with hallelujahs, sing,
"The Lord, the Saviour reigns."

SOUTH RIVER

Has always been a small church, but has had some very worthy and respectable members.

William Northern, who at present discharges the duties of pastor, has not been, many years, in the ministry. The pious own him as a messenger of peace.

WATER LICK

Was, in a considerable degree, the fruit of the ministry of Rev. John Price ; and he was their first pastor. After Mr. Price moved to Kentucky, they had the services of Rev. James Ireland, until his death. Since Mr. Ireland's death, God has raised up for this and some of the adjacent churches, the active and useful Samuel O'Hendren. This church has passed through a course, hitherto, not very prosperous nor very adverse.

Rev. John Price, their first pastor is a man of considerable gifts. He acted for many years as clerk to the Ketocton Association ; and was, while in Virginia, considered a man of weight in religious concerns. In Kentucky likewise, he has been distinguished as a man of zeal and parts. By some of his acquaintance, however, it has been thought that his zeal partook too much of the nature of party spirit. In the disputes about hereditary slavery, Mr. Price took a very active part in favour of hereditary slavery. In the late unhappy divisions in that country respecting the affair of Jacob Creath and others, Mr. Price is on the side of the minority ; who seem disposed to push things to extremes. In disputes, as inveterate as this has been, it is out of the question, in the estimation of men influenced by pious feelings, whether, in the merits of the case, this side or that is right. Men prompted by disinterested motives, for the love of God, will say to all parties, "Are ye not carnal?" It is impossible, in disputes carried on as that has been, but that both sides must be wrong. It is charitable to hope that Mr. Price, and those respectable characters engaged with him, will, in their last days, see better times, whenever love shall regain its ascendancy, and they shall

cease to bite and devour one another. Thomas Buck, clerk to the association, is a member of this church. He, though not a preacher in words, is a preacher in works. He is a man of wealth.

HAPPY CREEK.

This church was first called Lower South River; and has long been a church of good standing. Although never numerous, there have always been members in her communion, who were an honour to the cause which they professed.

Mr. Ireland was their first pastor. He resigned; and after others had acted and moved off, he again became their preacher until his death. Mr. Marshall, the second pastor, was among the first fruits of the ministry of the Separate Baptist preachers in Fauquier, about Carter's Run. He soon became a very zealous and successful preacher. From Carter's Run he went to Battle Run, and preached to much purpose. From thence he travelled over the Blue ridge, and preached in his zealous way upon South river, where was a considerable and rather singular stir.* Mr. Marshall being a man of more warmth than wisdom, more grace than gifts, did not obtain the pastoral care of a church at first. After some difficulties, he was at last chosen pastor of South River now called Happy Creek. But moving to Kentucky about 1782, he was succeeded in the care of the church, by John Taylor, one of her own sons. Mr. Taylor also, about 1783, moved to Kentucky; and has been there, as he was in Virginia, a preacher of weight, wisdom, and usefulness.

Benjamin Dawson, their present pastor, a few years past moved into the upper end of Fauquier; and although not within the limits of Happy Creek, yet being convenient, he was called as their preacher.

* It is said, that those religiously exercised, would bark as dogs. This exercise is said not to have been uncommon when the *Jerks* prevailed, in Kentucky.

He appears to be highly estimated by his fellow labourers in the association, and by his acquaintance generally. He is certainly a man of gifts, and of very pleasant manners.

BETHEL

Is a young church, taken off, as to the first members, from Buck Marsh; but has since increased rapidly.

Samuel O'Hendren, their pastor, is a young preacher, in high estimation wherever he is known. As thriving trees, show in spring, by their blossoms, that ripe fruit in plenty, may by and by be gathered; so Mr. Hendren's present exhibitions, indicate some precious and plenteous ingathering, at a future day. May neither frosts nor blasts corrupt or destroy the ripening fruit!

BUCK MARSH

Has long been far the most numerous church in the Ketocton Association. This church was planted by the labours of Daniel and William Fristoe and others. After their constitution, they were joined by a considerable number of members who were dismissed from Mill Creek. The distance at which the two Mr. Fristoes lived, rendered it inconvenient for them to act as stated pastors; they therefore, procured the attendance of Rev. John Garrard. After Mr. Garrard's death, Mr. Ireland became their pastor: which took place, about 1788. He continued their faithful and successful pastor, until his death, in 1806. Mr. Collins, the pastor of Zoar, a neighbouring church, then became their stated minister. He also died, anno 1808. Of late, Mr. Fristoe gives them, statedly, his ministerial labours, in much weakness, and in much wisdom, viz. bodily weakness and spiritual wisdom, the result of above forty years' experience.

ZOAR.

This church was first so called by her pastor, because "*she was a little one*" Although somewhat grown, they are still, but a small people.

Mr. Christopher Collins, their first pastor, was a man of a strong mind greatly improved by study and literary pursuits. He moved from Westmoreland to Jefferson, some years after he was baptized; but before he began to preach. The great dearth of good things in his new habitation, stirred up his spirit to appear in the pulpit. Being advanced in life before he became preacher, his talents did not appear to advantage. As a preacher, he was rather dry and tedious; yet what he said was sensible; and his labours were owned of God for good. He kept a kind of diary of his religious movements; by referring to which, he could tell every text, with the heads of every discourse, he ever delivered or ever heard delivered. In his conduct he was very remarkable for a singular correctness. He died regretted by all descriptions of persons.

Mr. Francis Moore, their present pastor, has been labouring in the vineyard but a few years. He commenced after the death of Mr. Collins, and was soon recognized by the church, as their pastor. He is the son of Jeremiah Moore, mentioned above, and is thought to have drunk from the same fountain. His ministry is thought already to have been productive of good, and is said to promise much and extensive good.

MILL CREEK.

This has been shown to be the oldest church in the Kettocton Association. (See General History of Regular Baptists.) Mr. Garrard continued to be their pastor until his death. After some years, viz. about 1788, they invited and obtained the services of Rev, David Thomas. The church had become much

smaller before Mr. Thomas became their pastor. For a season they rejoiced in his ministry ; but some of the members becoming wise in their own conceit, took it into their fancy, that Mr. Thomas preached false doctrine. It would be a waste of time and paper to state the ground of dispute. It was in fact a dispute, almost about nothing. But, behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. Out of this, they made out to stir up a contention, that lasted several years, caused a schism in the church, and interrupted the harmony of the association for several sessions. The party who objected to Mr. Thomas's doctrine, and who were excommunicated by the majority, formed something like an independent church, offered to join the Philadelphia Association, got them a preacher, baptized several persons, and really caused no little disturbance. In 1800, however, the breach was healed in a great measure. Most if not all that had been excluded, were reinstated, and those that had been baptized by unauthorized persons, were rebaptized. In the meantime, Mr. Thomas, discouraged by these inauspicious circumstances, added to some other cause, moved to Kentucky, where he is now living, but is almost blind. After their unhappy disputes were settled, the church invited Mr. John Hutchinson, their present pastor, to come and live among them, and take the pastoral care. Since Mr. Hutchinson has resided among them they have moved, in a more orderly and peaceable way.

Mr. Hutchinson is respected as a preacher of gifts, sound in the faith and successful in doing good.

TIMBER RIDGE.

This is quite a new church raised by the labours of Mr. Hutchinson.

NORTH RIVER, CROOKED RUN, AND
PATTERSON'S CREEK,

Are new churches ; concerning which, nothing interesting is known, except that they are preached to by elder John Munroe a practitioner of physic. The two last of these are new churches raised up under his labours.

Doctor Munroe has long been engaged in the heavenly employment of dispensing the gospel ; and was, when a resident of Fauquier, as well as since his removal to Hampshire, a very successful preacher of the gospel. In the pulpit, he is a man of solemn dignity, warm address, and speaks as one having authority. He frequently takes up contested subjects ; and his opponents sometimes complain, that at such seasons, he administers very strong corrosives. The Doctor, however, independent of this, preaches the gospel of peace, in power and demonstration of the Spirit. He is now getting old, and has professed divine things from early life, yet has maintained, from first to last, an unblameable conversation.

As a physician, he has been in extensive practice, and generally viewed as a man of skill.

NANJEMOY.

This church lies in the state of Maryland ; but having been raised by the labours of preachers within the Ketonston Association, they have hitherto continued among them.

TABLE OF GREENBRIER ASSOCIATION.

| <i>Names of Churches.</i> | <i>Year of Constitution.</i> | <i>No. at Constitution.</i> | <i>Present Number.</i> | <i>By whom planted.</i> | <i>Former Pastors.</i> | <i>Present Pastors.</i> | <i>Counties.</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Greenbrier | 1781 | 12 | | J. Alderson | J. Alderson | J. Alderson | Greenbrier |
| Big Levels | 1796 | 14 | 58 | J. Alderson J. Osburne | J. Osburne | J. Osburne | do |
| Taze's Valley | 1805 | 27 | 45 | J. Alderson J. Lee | J. Lee | J. Lee | Kenhawa |
| Mud River | 1807 | 20 | 20 | J. Alderson J. Lee | J. Lee | J. Lee | do |
| Kenhawa | 1796 | 12 | 33 | J. Alderson J. Johnston | J. Johnston | none | do |
| Cole River | 1807 | 45 | 35 | J. Alderson J. Johnston | J. Johnston | J. Lee | do |
| Peter's Creek | 1803 | 32 | 25 | J. Alderson J. Osburne E. Hughes | E. Hughes | E. Hughes | do |
| Indian Creek | 1792 | 23 | 61 | J. Alderson | M. Lacy J. Alderson | J. Ellison | Monroe |
| Blue Stone | 1804 | 12 | | J. Alderson — Stanley | — Stanley | none | Giles |

CHAPTER XXIX.

History of Greenbrier Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

Besides the churches west of the Alleghany in Greenbrier and the adjacent parts, there were some likewise, formed more southward, on New river, &c. These last associated with the Strawberry. But being very inconvenient, they were organized in 1793, as a separate association under the name of New River Association. The churches in and about Greenbrier, associated with the Ketocton; but now, finding it more convenient to unite with the New River, they petitioned the Ketocton, and obtained a

dismissal from them. And in 1795, became members of New River, which then consisted of ten churches. The New River Association were in the habit of holding, what they called conference meetings, in which several churches united in communion, &c. The Greenbrier churches also met occasionally in what they termed society meetings; in which, they proceeded almost in the same manner as an association. They received letters and delegates, attended to the requests of churches, gave their advice, and sent a circular letter from each meeting, &c. &c. The society meetings, it seems had a happy tendency towards ripening of them for a separate association, which their inconvenient situation, as it respected the other part of the New River district, seemed to demand. After associating about six years with the New River Association, they petitioned, and obtained leave to form a separate constitution. Mr. Osburne mentions this subject in the following words: "The reason which induced us to become an association, was convenience. The New River District Association being at such a distance from us, made it inconvenient to attend. Brother Alderson, Johnston, and myself were delegated to attend the association; and while we were there, a motion was made by some person, that we should become an associate body by ourselves. The next year, we accordingly petitioned to that effect, and had our petition granted. This measure threw my mind into a great exercise in respect to supporting the dignity of an association; seeing, at that time, we had but four churches and three ordained ministers. When the time came for our society meeting, in which we were to consult whether we were to become an association or not, my mind was so overpowered with a sense of the greatness of the undertaking, that I was determined to oppose its constitution; but brother Alderson being appointed to preach the introductory sermon, accordingly preached. In his sermon, he showed that God

did not choose the Jews because they were numerous, but because they were few in number, in order to show his power, and make himself a glorious name. This discovery had its proper effect. I plainly saw, that God could, of a handful of weak and despised outcasts, make a great people. Although pressed on every side, he will cause them to grow and thrive. Thus while we were but a weak and feeble band, we were constituted, in 1807. At that time we were but four churches, now we are nine; with a hope that we shall still continue to increase."

They have continued to meet regularly, since their constitution. The business of the association has been conducted prudently; and at them, the preaching and other public exercises have been often very powerful and generally happy. Not having any of their minutes, details of the proceedings of the associations cannot be given. The association annually meet the Friday before the second Sunday in September, and continue three days. Mr. John Alderson has generally acted as moderator, sometimes Mr. Josiah Osburne; and Mr. Crutchfield of late years as clerk. Before him Mr. Osburne was clerk. We shall, therefore, proceed to the sketches of the churches; beginning with

GREENBRIER.

By giving a historical relation of this church in particular, the reader will be informed of the first rise of the Baptists in these parts, seeing this is the oldest church in the district, and is, in a sense, the mother of the rest. They have been from first to last, a prosperous people; yet, like all others, have had their ebbs and floods. By attending to Mr. Alderson's memoir, we shall see her rise and progress.

Mr. Alderson was born in the state of New Jersey, and was the son of Rev. John Alderson, a Baptist minister of considerable distinction. His father had the pastoral care of Lynville's Creek church, in Rock-

ingham county, where his son first entered upon the ministry.

Mr. Alderfon, in his communications to the editor, gives the following account of his early life :

“ My father being much from home, and I being the oldest son, much dependance was placed on me, to take care of the farm : so that I had very little opportunity to learn. The chief of the books that I read, were the bible and the Baptist catechism ; which last I got by heart ; and not only said it over at school, but also in the public congregations, on Sundays, after sermon. By these means I was kept from all gross immoralities. By an expression dropt from my father, after I had recovered from a very severe spell of sickness, my mind was very solemnly impressed ; which I have never lost to this day. After passing through a painful and tedious law work, in which, I would set resolutions, and then break them ; I became at last, deeply concerned. I sought the Lord, with my whole heart ; and at last, obtained comfort, great comfort, by the application of these words : “ You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” After many trials and doubts as to my conversion, I began at last to be exercised about preaching. I, at first, thought it impossible, that so weak a creature as I, could be called to preach : but being persuaded at last, by many divine tokens, that it was the will of God, I entered upon the solemn work.”

October, 1775, - which was after the removal of his father, he was inaugurated as pastor of Lynville's Creek church. A short time after this, he visited Greenbrier, and finding a wild, uncultivated place, in which, Christ and his cross was seldom, if ever preached. His bowels yearned towards the people. He proclaimed among them the pure gospel. It produced some gracious consequences. Sometime after his return home, he was particularly sent for, to revisit Greenbrier. He went ; and found one per-

son, at least, ripe for baptism, whom he received (being aided by two of his members who had removed to that country) and baptized.

At another visit, some time after, he baptized two others. On this visit, he began to meet with opposition. Some of the people held the Baptists in very great contempt. He continued his ministrations in Greenbrier, and continued them with success. God was with him and prospered him. The desert has blossomed as a rose.

Mr. Alderson moved to Greenbrier to live, in the year 1777, and has ever since continued among them in the same place where he first settled. About this time the Indian war broke out; and the inhabitants of Greenbrier, &c. were obliged to shut themselves up in forts. This continued four years, and was a great hindrance to the progress of the gospel. Mr. Alderson, notwithstanding, continued his ministerial labours. After having preached to the inhabitants of one fort, protected by a small guard, he would travel through woods and wilds, until he reached another. In some of the forts, he was gladly received and attentively heard. In others, he was sometimes much opposed. One fort proposed to shut their gates against him; but he finally obtained admittance. At some times he was threatened with very rough treatment; but these threats were never executed. He continued his labours through these various discouragements. Neither cold, nor heat, nor storms; nor perils from savages; nor perils from his own countrymen; nor perils from destructive beasts: nor inward temptations, nor outward afflictions, retarded his labours. He that was for him, was more than all that could be against him. Seven long years did Mr. Alderson continue his work; during which, he never heard or saw a Baptist preacher except himself. As many as two or three licensed itinerant Presbyterian preachers passed through

the settlement, in that time. These preached the doctrine of free grace, and were acceptable to Mr. A. and his handful of members.

Having gathered as many as twelve members, all of whom, with their preacher, considered themselves an arm of Lynville's Creek church; they petitioned the Ketocton Association for helps, that they might be organized as a church. One chief view which they had, in applying to the association, was upon a hope, that some other preachers might be sent among them. For, some of the opposers said that they were entirely a new people; and that there were none others in the world. In these hopes they were disappointed. The association replied, that if they wished to be constituted, they had the power in their own hands. Accordingly, on the 24th of November, 1781, they, by mutual consent, formed themselves into a gospel church called Greenbrier. They had a written church covenant, which they placed in the front of their church book. Mr. Alderson of course, was their pastor.

The next spring they appointed a communion, or in other words, the administration of the Lord's supper. Numbers came forward and requested the privilege of communing with them; to whom the church replied, as might be expected, that none were admitted to the communion, except they were previously baptized, upon a profession of vital faith, and had yielded themselves as members of the church. When they heard this, many of them changed their tone and became enemies.

In 1786, the work of God broke out, on the right hand and on the left, through different parts of the country; and continued until 1790. In describing this revival, our informant, the Rev. Josiah Osburne, makes use of the following language: "In this revival, a number of members were added; the mouths of gainfayers were stopped. The peoples' mouths, ears, hearts, and doors, were all open to receive the word.

Now, the time of the singing of birds was come ; and the voice of the turtle was heard in our land. Which caused the heart of the old mourning preacher to rejoice in his God, and to say with the prophet, Zion's cords are lengthened, and her stakes are strengthened. Thus, where darkness reigned, and the savage yell was heard ; the unwilling captive led in chains, through the wilderness to a land of sorrow and worse than Egyptian darkness, to linger in sorrow and pain the wretched remains of life ; the Lord opened a wide and effectual door, for the preaching of Jesus, by which numbers felt the virtue of his blood, and were brought home to God." In the midst of these goodly times, the Methodists made their appearance, and raised no small opposition about doctrines. " They," says our informant, " took brother Alderson's track ; made his preaching places theirs. Numbers under conviction and in a hopeful way, joined them ; and although alarmed by the preaching of the Baptists, turned to be their persecutors." The revival being over, a declension ensued. The love of many waxed cold, and several were excluded. Mr. A. now deplored the state of Zion. But God heard his groans.

Indian Creek church, hitherto an arm of Greenbrier, was constituted in the year 1792, under the care of Mark Richards, a preacher who had been raised up in the revival. In the constitution of this church, Mr. Alderson obtained the aid of Mr. Johnston, who was the first Baptist preacher that ever visited those parts, after Mr. A.'s removal thither. Mr. Johnston finally became a resident. After the year 1792, times became better ; and they had a gradual revival. In 1794, elder Josiah Osburne moved from Hardy county, and settled in Greenbrier. He was a great accession to Mr. A. who thus speaks of him : " Brother Osburne, then a licensed preacher, moved from Lost river, Hardy county, and settled on the Big levels of Greenbrier, where there was one arm of

our church : thanks to the Lord, we have stood together ever since."

Mr Alderson is now a very old man, yet still labours as much as ever, if not more. He has given up the world, as to its cares ; and is only waiting for the crown of life.

BIG LEVELS.

This church was raised under the ministry of elder Josiah Osburne ; except as to a few who had been baptized by elder Alderson, previous to the removal of Mr. Osburne into that country. It has always prospered moderately, and has enjoyed harmony and peace. An anecdote is told by elder Osburne respecting this church, which appears worthy of notice. A man by the name of Newel was severely afflicted with convulsion fits. He had them so violently, that his life was despaired of. He became a christian, and was baptized. Since which, he has never had a fit within the knowledge of any person. How is this to be accounted for ? The unthinking will say, it happened so. The philosophers, without faith, will say, it was owed to some natural cause ; perhaps the baptizing effected the cure ; seeing cold baths are sometimes beneficial in such cases. But a spiritual believer, will see in it, an unseen hand, capable of working with or without natural causes.

Elder Josiah Osburne, pastor of the above church, was born March 5th, 1750, and raised a Presbyterian. His education wa almost nothing ; being scarcely able to read when he grew up to manhood. Having received religious instruction from his parents, he had early exercises about religion ; but altogether in a legal way. He continued his outward appearances, until he left his father's house. He then gave up all pretensions to seriousness ; and became openly vicious, until he was twenty eight years of age. He then heard a Baptist minister preach. The word came home to his heart ; and he felt himself under the

curse of God's broken law. His convictions became so strong, that he despaired of mercy. His despair, however, was not of long continuance: in due season, God revealed his arm, and showed him that he could justify sinners without the deeds of the law. He rejoiced in the discovery with unspeakable joy. His impressions now led him to wish to do something for a Redeemer, who had done so much for him. But he felt himself incapable. He strove for divine instruction; and God applied forcibly to his mind this text: "I have chosen—the things that are not, to bring to nought, things that are." He then yielded; and began to preach, yet under very great embarrassments. When a meeting would be appointed he thought that he would attend that, and would then decline for the future. Having obtained help, he has continued from that day to this, preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Mr. Osburne's labours in the ministry have been exceedingly blessed in the country where he resides.

As a preacher, he stands equal, if not superior, to any in that country. He has a singular turn for touching the feelings: so that, at associations and great meetings, it is generally laid upon him, to close the meeting. In such cases, God has often owned his exhortations, &c. to valuable purposes.

A few years past, he was drawn into a debate about believers' baptism, by some of the Pedobaptists. In consequence of this, his mind was imperceptibly led, to think much on this subject; and finally, to commit his thoughts to writing. This he did, in such an able manner, that his friends to whom he showed it, insisted on printing it. He consented; and it came out, under the title of David and Goliath. By many, this is considered one of the best treatises on baptism, that has ever been published.

TAZE'S VALLEY AND MUD RIVER.

Nothing has occurred in either of these churches

worth noticing. They lie in the lower end of Kenhawa county, contiguous to the Kentucky line.

KENHAWA.

This church flourished greatly while it was under the care of elder Johnston; insomuch, that in a few years, two other churches were constituted from it. But the removal of their minister who went to Kentucky, proved a heavy misfortune. They experienced great declension, and have ever since been without a pastor.

COLE RIVER

Had, at the time of her constitution, a considerable revival within her limits. But her minister, elder Johnston removing to Kentucky in a short time, they declined in some degree. Elder Lee is their preacher at present.

PETER'S CREEK,

Was in a revived state, when constituted, but now is the reverse. It was literally, when constituted, a church in the wilderness.

INDIAN CREEK,

Was taken from Greenbrier, as has been shown. When constituted, Mark Lacy was pastor. At first, for a small space of time, the church flourished. But Lacy, after a short period, began to conduct himself unbecomingly his station; which finally ended in his exclusion. In consequence of this, the church drooped, and were on the point of dissolving their constitution, when in the year 1797, Mr. Alderson undertook to supply them. Being a favourite son of heaven, through his labours the church again revived; and God raised, within her borders, what may be termed, one of the best gifts that a church can receive, a faith-

ful minister. James Ellison was ordained to the pastoral care of this church, anno 1808.

BLUE STONE.

There is nothing remarkable respecting this church. They are very destitute of ministerial supply.

TABLE OF UNION ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches | Year of Constitution. | No. at Constitution. | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Sumpton's Creek | 1775 | 5 | 45 | J. Sutton | J. Sutton | J. H. Gofs | Harrison |
| Buchanan | 1786 | 5 | 17 | J. W. Loveberry. | J. Loveberry J. Cazod | J. Catney | do |
| Good Hope | 1806 | 12 | 12 | | J. Waldo | J. Waldo | do |
| Olive Branch | 1803 | 9 | 23 | | | P. Wells | do |
| West Fork | 1801 | 9 | 14 | | J. Denham J. Morris | J. Hickman J. H. Gofs | do |
| Salem | 1801 | 9 | 14 | | | J. H. Gofs | do |
| Union | 1802 | 5 | 20 | | | P. Wells | do |
| Valley | 1806 | 10 | 22 | | | P. Wells S. Harriis | Randolph |
| Little Bethel | 1795 | 5 | 27 | | | P. Wells | do |
| Pritchell's | 1786 | 8 | 28 | | J. Denham | J. Hickman | Monongalia |
| Creek | 1805 | 7 | 14 | | | P. Martin | do |
| Pawpaw | 1798 | 15 | 21 | | | J. Smith | do |
| Sandy Creek | 1803 | 10 | 7 | | | none | do |
| Gethsemane | | | | | | | |

CHAPTER XXX.

History of the Union Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

The churches of which this association is composed, were in connexion with the Red Stone, until 1804 : when they were dismissed to form an independent association ; having nine churches. They meet once a year, viz. the Friday before the last Sunday in August ; and continue three days. Of their proceedings in the association, nothing is known. We can offer a few remarks respecting the churches, &c.

SIMPSON'S CREEK.

At the time that this church was constituted, the country where the members resided, was but newly settled. They passed through many difficulties at first; but finally, rose above them all.

Their first pastor, Mr. Sutton, was considered a man of talents, piety, and usefulness. Elder Goss, their present pastor, moved, a few years past, from Albemarle; having, previous to that, travelled and preached very considerably. It is presumable, he is equally industrious, in his new habitation; and probably more successful:

BUCHANAN'S.

This church, at first very small, was revived soon after their constitution; and became large and respectable. But by the constitution of other churches, they are now reduced to seventeen:

OLIVE BRANCH

Enjoyed a comfortable revival, soon after they were constituted. But churches, like individuals, when they think they stand, should take heed, lest they fall. There has been a great declension in this church, of late.

WEST FORK,

Under the labours of elder Hickman, has rather flourished than otherwise.

SALEM

Has rather prospered. From 1801 until 1805, elder John Denham was pastor: from 1805 until 1809, Isaac Morriss. They now have the ministerial services of Mr. Goss.

VALLEY

Has no regular pastor; but is statedly supplied by elder Wells and Harriſs. They are a thriving people.

LITTLE BETHEL.

This church is alſo ſupplied by Mr. Wells. And although in the miſt of mountains, and a wilderneſs country, they enjoy the ſweet ſunſhine of divine mercy.

PRITCHEL'S CREEK.

This church, though ſmall at firſt, increaſed, in 1805, to fifty members: but by the diſmiſſion of members, &c, is reduced now to twenty eight.

SANDY CREEK.

“ This church,” ſays Mr. Alderſon (who furniſhed all our accounts reſpecting this aſſociation,) “ has gone through various ſcenes, as to revivals and declenſions, as moſt of the churches on the weſtern waters have. We all have to ſtand againſt a torrent of oppoſition, from different quarters; eſpecially the Arminians.”

GETHSEMENE

Is, at preſent, rather declining. They have no ſtated miniſtry; but catch the goſpel as it is occaſionally brought by travelling preachers.

GOOD HOPE.

UNION.

PAWPAW.

Of the above churches, concerning which, no-

thing is said, nothing is known by the compiler; except the articles found in the table.

We should have been highly gratified to say something respecting the ministers of the gospel, in this association; but, for the want of acquaintance, cannot.

TABLE OF RED STONE ASSOCIATION.

| Names of Churches | Year of Constitution. | Number at Constitution | Present number. | By whom planted. | Former pastors. | Present pastors. | Counties. |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Little Bethel | 1801 | 11 | 50 | | J. Patterson | J. Patterson | Monongalia |
| Forks of Cheat Mount | 1795 | 12 | 47 | | J. Corbley | none | do |
| Tabor Mount | 1788 | 9 | 47 | | | J. W. Patterson | do |
| Olivet | 1801 | 10 | 18 | | | none | do |
| Antioch | 1806 | 9 | 18 | | | J. W. Patterson | do |
| Short Creek | 1802 | 12 | 104 | | E. Martin | E. Martin | Ohio |
| Cross Creek | 1802 | 13 | 60 | | J. Pritchard | J. Pritchard | Brooke |

CHAPTER XXXI.

History of the Red Stone Association, including the Sketches of Churches.

Red Stone Association was organized, October, 1776. It is not known how many churches were in the association at the time of the constitution; as it is probable there were some dismissed from different associations, for that purpose. The Ketocton Association, in her session for 1775, dismissed the four following, viz. Laurel Hill, Isaac Sutton, pastor, thirty seven members. Ten Mile Creek, James Sutton, eighteen members. Patterson's Creek, Joseph Barnet, pastor, six members. Goshen, John Corbley, pastor, sixty members. Making, in all, one hundred and twenty one members, and four preachers. The Red Stone district is partly in Pennsylvania, and partly in Virginia.* The num-

* It is also said, there are some churches in the Ohio state, belonging to Red Stone Association.

ber of churches in Pennsylvania is not known. The proceedings of the association are not known in any degree. The state of the churches, beyond what is represented by the table, is very little known. Such as is known shall be here given.

LITTLE BETHEL.

Soon after their constitution, this church had a pleasant revival; and rose from eleven to fifty. They receive and feed upon the bread of life, dealt out to them stately, by their beloved minister, John Patterson.

FORKS OF CHEAT

Was first organized, under the attention of Rev. John Corbley. They have been rather a thriving people; especially during the time of Mr. Corbley.

MOUNT TABOR.

They had, about the year 1802, a precious revival; when their numbers increased to upwards of sixty. Since that pleasant season, they have rather declined.

SHORT CREEK

Began with the small number of twelve; and have increased, through the riches of grace, to one hundred and four. Elder Enoch Martin, their pastor, at the command of Christ, cast the net on the right side; and gathered it full.

CROSS CREEK.

This also is a thriving church. Elder John Richard, their minister, has the happiness, most to be desired by a faithful preacher of the gospel, viz. the success of his labours.

MOUNT OLIVET.

ANTIOCH.

Nothing more than what is seen in the table, is known, of the churches passed over.

The term Regular Baptists, is kept up in Red Stone Association, in contradistinction to the Seventh Day Baptists; who are numerous in some parts of the district.

There are also some who were deluded by the impostor, Samuel Counsil, mentioned in our account of the Accomack Association.

The number of members, in all the Red Stone Association, a few years past, was one thousand three hundred and thirty five: among whom, were thirteen or fourteen ordained preachers; besides licensed ones. Some of the preachers in the Red Stone Association, are said to be men of great abilities.

For a historical account of J. Corbley, see Biography.

TABLE OF PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION.

| <i>Names of Churches.</i> | <i>Year of Constitution.</i> | <i>No. at Constitution.</i> | <i>Present Number.</i> | <i>By whom planted.</i> | <i>Former Pastors.</i> | <i>Present Pastors.</i> | <i>Counties.</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Pungo | 1762 | 45 | 86 | | J. Gamewell G. Plummer | J. Lawrence | Princels Ann |
| Black Water | 1784 | | 69 | G. Plummer T. Armistead | W. Sorey | W. Sorey | do |
| London Bridge | 1784 | 55 | 193 | | W. Morris | J. Ritter | do |
| Norfolk | 1804 | | 290 | | W. Goodall | none | Norfolk |
| Portsmouth | 1789 | | 68 | T. Armistead E. Baker | T. Armistead D. Biggs | none | do |
| Upper Bridge | 1782 | 9 | 56 | | E. Mintz T. Etheredge J. Grigg | D. Casey | do |
| Shoulder's Hill | 1785 | | 217 | D. Barrow E. Mintz | E. Mintz J. Ritter | T. Bunting | Nantsemond |
| Western Branch | 1779 | 8 | 49 | | E. Mintz | T. Bunting | do |
| South Quay | 1785 | 24 | 96 | D. Barrow | D. Barrow | J. Bowers | Southampton |
| Black Creek | 1786 | 70 | 103 | J. Dupuy D. Barrow | D. Barrow | W. Browne | do |
| Meherrin | 1788 | | 139 | | J. Meglamre | W. Browne | do |
| Tucker's Swamp | 1807 | 15 | 26 | | H. Jones | H. Jones | do |
| Sea Cock | 1787 | 18 | 55 | E. Baker | | W. Browne | Suffex |
| Racoon Swamp | 1772 | 87 | 168 | J. Meglamre | J. Meglamre | W. Browne | do |
| High Hills of Nottoway | 1787 | | 34 | | W. Browne | W. Chamblefs | do |
| Sappony | 1773 | 6 | 59 | J. Walker | J. Bowers J. Bell | none | do |
| Mill Swamp | 1774 | 21 | 200 | J. Meglamre | D. Barrow | W. Browne | Isle of Wight |
| Otter Dams | 1791 | | 81 | | B. Boothe | B. Boothe | Surrey |
| Rowanty | 1775 | | 22 | | J. Lee | none | Diawiddle |
| Davenport's | | | 165 | J. Lee | J. Lee J. Wright | none | Prince George |

CHAPTER XXXII.

History of the Portsmouth Association, from the first Settlement of Baptists within her limits, until the present Day.

It has already been shown, page 1, that the first Baptists who made their appearance in Virginia, settled in the south east parts of the state. Of these, it is proper now to treat.

The account of their first origin are somewhat different. In certain memorandums, furnished by Mr. Leland, it is stated " that the first society of Baptists that was ever in Virginia, that we have any account of, was in Isle of Wight at a place called Burley, about 1727. This society was composed of emigrants from England, who had Rev. Richard Nordin for their minister. He soon returned to England, and was succeeded by Messrs. Casper Mintz, and Richard Jones. The church was formed upon the Arminian plan, and is now extinct." Mr. Leland's manuscript was, for some time, in possession of Mr. Backus of New England, who inserted the following note :

" A letter is now before me, written from Virginia, to elder Eyres of Newport, January 28th, 1742, by John Hamerftley ; where it appears, that in consequence of letters from Virginia, Robert Nordin and Thomas White were ordained in London, in May, 1714; and soon sailed for Virginia. But White died by the way, and Nordin arrived in Virginia and gathered a Baptist church in Prince George county ; and held meetings there and in other places, until he died, December 1st, 1725, in a good old age. And on April 30th, 1727, the church ordained Richard Jones their elder, who continued to be their minister in 1742, the church had about forty members."

ISAAC BACKUS.

May 31st, 1803.

Mr. Backus farther notes, "William Sojourner went from that church, and gathered a church in North Carolina, about 1740." Mr. Leland observing Mr. Backus's note, says in a letter to the editor, "you will see in my manuscript, elder Backus's note. I collected my account from Mr. Morgan's materials. Mr. Backus got his information from an old letter sent to elder Eyres. If there was a Robert Nordin in Prince George, and a Richard Nordin in Isle of Wight, the difficulty ceases. But if there was but one Nordin who emigrated from England to America, one of the accounts must be wrong. Perhaps Burkit's history will solve the doubt."

Burkit and Read's history says nothing about it. Nor is it probable there can be any farther information obtained at this day. It appears, however, to the editor, more than probable, that Mr. Backus is substantially correct, for the following reasons: Mr. B. had a document before him, written as early as 1742, about twenty eight years subsequent to the earliest time mentioned: so that without supposing the writer to be more than forty or fifty years of age, he might have been an immediate witness of the facts related. And indeed from his exactness as to dates, both in London and America, it is quite likely that he was himself one of the first emigrants that composed the church. At any rate, he writes as one who possesses an intimate acquaintance with the subject, from first to last. The difference between the two statements may be accounted for, by considering, that Mr. Edwards did not procure his information, until about forty years after the date of the letter mentioned above, and that at that period a great deal of it must have been traditional, and consequently much more liable to be incorrect. This may explain the difference of names and dates. As to the difference of counties, it is not improbable, that the Isle

of Wight and Prince George might have been at that time all one county.

From these considerations, it appears that Mr. B.'s note must be accurate; and that Baptists and Baptist principles, have been in Virginia, very little (if any) less than one hundred years.

Let us now pursue the narrative, as we have it laid down in Mr. Leland's memorandums, and in the history of the Kehukee Association.

We find this church in the year 1742, tolerably prosperous under the care of Rev. Richard Jones, who, it appears from both statements, was installed as pastor, in 1727. How long Mr. Jones continued after this date, is not now known. The church itself is now extinct. The last account of her existence, was in December, 1756; at which time, there was a division among them. Some died, and some moved to North Carolina, &c. so that it is not improbable that her dissolution took place, not long after. Those that moved to North Carolina were much more successful. In the course of ten years, after this, they were increased to sixteen churches. The Kehukee history relates, "that under the ministry of Messrs. Paul Palmer and Joseph Parker, the most of the original churches were planted. It is not said whether they were emigrants from England or native Americans. The most probable conjecture is, that they were some of the first fruits of the labours of Mr. Sojourner, mentioned in Mr. Backus's note. And indeed there can be but little doubt but that Mr. Nordin and Mr. Jones, (the first of whom lived eleven years, and the second at least fifteen), extended their ministry farther than the immediate church to which they acted as pastor. Palmer and Parker were both Arminians; and so were the churches and preachers raised under their ministry. From which circumstance, together with some original papers still extant, it seems almost certain, that the first

emigrants were what in England are called General Baptists.

Their manner of gathering churches was very loose indeed : Or at least, was very adverse to the method now prevalent among the Baptists in Virginia. They required no experience of grace or account of their conversion. But baptized all who asked it and professed to believe in the doctrine of baptism by immersion.* It does not appear that they ever held associations or meetings by that name ; but instead of these they had yearly meetings : at which they transacted business of a general nature ; or such as respected the welfare of all their churches

Some time previous to the year 1765,† Rev. Messrs. Vanhorn and Miller, residents of New Jersey, were sent from the Philadelphia Association to visit the churches, and to set things in order among them. By some they were viewed with jealousy and distrust ; being styled Newlights. But by most of the churches they were cordially received. Their labour was not in vain. They effected much, very much indeed. By their preaching and conversation, many precious souls were raised from the sleep of death. The spirits of such as had ever tasted that the Lord was gracious, were much refreshed. The honour of religion, as professed by the Baptists, was exceedingly enlarged. Their speech and preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom ; but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Many of the members of the churches were convinced of the incorrectness of the Arminian doctrine, and relinquished it. And where these were sufficiently numerous, and otherwise qualified, they were newly organized and

* It is probable they required a promise on the part of the candidate to reform his life, and in general to be religious ; which it is said is all that is required by many of the ministers of the General Baptists in England.

† The editor could not find, from the Kehukee history, or from any documents before him, the precise year in which they came.

formed into new churches ; according to the plan of the Philadelphia Association ; or rather according to the Baptist confession of faith published in London in 1689 ; according to which it seems the Philadelphia and Charleston Associations were organized. What these reverend fathers left unfinished, was afterwards completed by their sons in the ministry. The Arminian doctrine and discipline soon disappeared ; and the churches all became Regular Baptists. It is not intended to be understood, that this revolution met with no opposition. This was not to be looked for. Messrs. Parker and Palmer, it has been said, were the fathers of these churches. Mr. Palmer was dead. Mr. Parker was living ; and with two other preachers, viz. William Parker and ——— Winfield, continued still to pursue their former method. But being deserted by so large a majority, their party finally dwindled to nothing.

Nothing certainly appears by which it can be ascertained whether they corresponded with any other Baptists in America, previous to the above reformation. There are some circumstances, however, which make it probable that they did. 1st, The letter written by Mr. Hamersley to Mr. Eyres, mentioned in Mr. Backus's note renders it probable that some previous intercourse had subsisted between the Baptists in Virginia and those of New England.

2dly, It would appear hardly reasonable that the Philadelphia Association would send messengers to any place or people with whom they had no correspondence. Lastly, It is presumable, from the correspondence with the Charleston Association, which immediately took place after the Kehukee Association was formed, that there had been some former acquaintance.

The churches thus newly organized, formed themselves into an association. Their first session was holden in the year 1765, at a place called Kehukee ; and for this reason, their association was called by

that name. They immediately established a correspondence with the Charleston Association. The ministers belonging to the Kehukee Association at first, or, however, the principal ones, were Jonathan Thomas, John Thomas, John Moore, John Burges, William Burges, Charles Daniel, William Walker, John Meglamre, James Abbingdon, Thomas Pope, and Henry Abbot. Of these, only two, viz. John Meglamre, and James Abbingdon, were baptized, after the introduction of Calvinistic principles.

About the time of the constitution of Kehukee, the Separate Baptists became very numerous in the upper parts of North Carolina and Virginia; and had formed themselves into an association. The Kehukee Association being desirous to form a more close connexion with people whose zeal and piety they so much revered, about the year 1772, sent elders Meglamre and Thomas as deputies to the Separate Baptist Association; which was holden at Waller's meeting house, in Spottsylvania county. The deputies were kindly received: and the Separate Association also, deputed two of their ministers, viz. E. Craig and David Thomson, to visit the Kehukee the next August, at their association to be holden at the Kehukee meeting house, Halifax county, North Carolina. They attended; the subject was taken up; and the Separates stated the following objections to a communion with them: 1st, that they were not sufficiently strict in receiving church members. 2dly. They were, as they alledged, too superfluous in their dress; contending, that excessive dress ought to be made a matter of church discipline. 3dly, that their principles and practices were at variance; because, although they believed that faith in Christ Jesus was essential to baptism, yet they retained many members in their church, who acknowledged themselves to have been baptized in a state of unbelief. This last, was declared to be the main bar to a complete union. Their objection upon this ground, was the

more effectual, because it had been a matter of considerable embarrassment to a great number of the Kenukee ministers; who had many thoughts of attempting a reformation. This occurrence furnished them with more favourable ground to make a beginning; which was accordingly done, in the year 1774. Mr. Burkit's church first held a conference, and publicly proclaimed, that they would commune with none, who confessed they were baptized before conversion. Alledging, that adult persons had no better claim to baptism, while they were in a state of impenitence and unbelief, than infants had. Mr. Burkit's church was followed by several others. But when the next association met, which was that year, viz. 1775, holden at Moore's meeting house, on the following October. The reformers met with severe opposition. The correctness of their proceedings was much questioned. Much dissension arose. One party blamed the other for doing too much; who in their turn were equally severe upon their opponents, for not doing enough. Not inclined to associate together, both parties claimed the right of being called the association. The reformers, because what they had done was exactly congenial to the original plan, upon which the association was organized. The other party, being most numerous, insisted that a majority ought to retain the power, and, consequently, the name of the association. They moreover argued, that whatever might be their principles, it was well known at the time of the constitution of the association, that this evil existed in greater force than it did at that time; seeing none had been baptized in known unbelief, since the constitution: That therefore, it was virtually if not pointedly agreed, that such as were then in orderly standing, might retain their membership; lest more mischief might ensue, by being too rigorous, than by submitting to small inconveniences for the sake of peace: That the association having been in existence for eight or nine

years ; all of which time they had suffered the inconvenience, it was now rather strange, that they, at this late period, should attempt a revolution so likely to disturb the peace and harmony of the churches. To all these arguments, it was answered : that to them it was a matter of conscience ; which they could not relinquish without wounding their own souls. As neither side would give way, things came to extremities. Each party organized a distinct assembly or association. The reformers kept possession of the meeting house ; whilst the opposite party retired, first to the woods, and, on the 2d day, procured a private house in the neighbourhood. All attempts at reconciliation, proved ineffectual during this session. Each party transacted their own business ; of which however very little was done. These party broils were exceedingly afflicting to the pious on both sides. It would appear from the arguments on the old side, that many of them did not deny the principles of this reformation, so much as the necessity ; seeing it would unavoidably produce much confusion ; and if let alone the evil would of course, in time, vanish. Those who had undertaken to effect the reformation, persevered ; and finally accomplished their wishes.*

In August, 1777, they held their first undisputed association, at elder Bell's meeting house, in Suffolk county, Virginia. They found on assembling, that their strength had very much increased. Ten churches had sent letters and delegates ; of which it appeared that six were Regulars, or the old side, and four were Separates : who finding their former obstacles removing, and being convenient, were incorporated with this association. Of these ten churches, four were in Virginia, and six in North Carolina. Their whole number of members

* The Regular Association dwindled ; and finally came to nothing : partly by falling in with the Separates, and partly by other causes.

consisted of one thousand five hundred and ninety : which was indeed very considerable for that early period. They agreed now, upon an abstract of principles ; which was afterwards printed and published. In doctrines nor discipline it did not substantially differ from the confession of faith generally received among the Baptists. They agreed to hold two associations annually. And appointed the next at Burkit's meeting house, the next May. The Kehukee Association continued to meet regularly, and to increase rapidly, until the year 1790. At their October session for that year, it was found that there were no less than sixty one churches ; having more than five thousand members. Several ineffectual attempts, previous to this, had been made to divide the district. The number of churches was now so large that a division was almost indispensable. They accordingly agreed to divide by the state line, leaving forty two churches in North Carolina and nineteen in Virginia. The Virginia churches met by their delegates, for the first time, May 1791, at Portsmouth ; and on that account named their association the Virginia Portsmouth Association. Their time of meeting has been, from the first, on the fourth Saturday in May, annually. Their business has been transacted in peace and prudence. The number of churches have increased ; but not so rapidly as in some other associations. While elder Meglamre lived and attended the associations, he generally acted as moderator. After his death, or when he was absent, the duties of moderator most commonly devolved upon Rev. David Barrow, until his removal to Kentucky. Since his removal, elders Browne, Bowers, Murrell, &c. have occasionally acted. Until the division of the Kehukee district, Mr. Burkit, (joint author of the Kehukee history,) was the standing clerk. Since the division, that office has fallen into the hands of different persons at different times. Elders William Browne, James Wright, &c. were in

their turns placed in that office. Not having a regular file of the minutes of the association, a detail of their proceedings cannot be exhibited. This, however, is the less necessary at this stage of our work, inasmuch as the business of so many others is already detailed, that it is not presumable that there would be any thing new or singular.

There are some very valuable and able preachers within the Portsmouth Association; but it is the opinion of some who are intimately acquainted, that in point of ministerial talents, they have rather depreciated. A sanguine believer can, nevertheless, anticipate a day, when God shall send them *judges as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning*: When the watchmen now upon the walls, aided by a new band, shall proclaim to Zion, "*Thy God reigneth.*"

PUNGO

Church, is among the oldest churches in Virginia. Whilst they have had their days of adversity, as well as their days of prosperity, God has still preserved them a name among the families of Israel. Preachers, like servants, can give us much ease: they can also stir up much confusion. In 1766, their first pastor, George Plummer, was inaugurated. He, forsooth, must marry his wife's sister; and was of course suspended. In January, 1774, they made choice of Joshua Lawrence. For some years, he stood in high estimation: but some charges being exhibited against him, though not satisfactorily proven, the church, with the assistance of helps, offered an appeal to his own conscience; proposing that he should acknowledge, or deny the charges exhibited against him. This he refused; and was excluded. He then commenced preaching upon his own independence. And publicly and solemnly denied the charges; hereby, shewing more respect to the world than the church. He formed a party, who built him a meet-

ing house. After some years, however, he was re-instated. Well might Paul say of ministers, "not self-willed."

BLACK WATER

Is a daughter of Pungo. Nothing very remarkable has occurred here.

LONDON BRIDGE

Has generally been a prosperous church. Their first pastor was William Morris; who, after serving them faithfully about seventeen or eighteen years, in 1802, took a dismission to Kentucky, the cemetery of Virginia Baptist preachers. This was matter of great grief to his affectionate people.

They next obtained the services of Jeremiah Ritter; who has administered to them with considerable success. Of late years, God has raised among them, William P. Biddle, a young preacher of promising talents, and very amiable deportment. How refreshing are these young and faithful ambassadors.

NORFOLK

Church, was taken off from Portsmouth. They have had their full share of calamities: calamities severe, and sorrowful indeed and in truth. Before their constitution, they were cursed with an arrant impostor, by the name of Frost. He came from Europe, and pretended to be a preacher. He made much confusion; to settle which, the church appointed certain persons to take him under dealings. Frost refused to hear them, and attended an appointment of his, to preach, that evening. Just as he commenced preaching, he dropt down in the pulpit, and expired in about three hours. In 1802, one Mather, another European vagabond preacher came to Norfolk, and made no little confusion. He also soon died. In 1803, Benjamin Ashley, Peter Lugg, Henry Keeling, and James Mitchell were ordained to the

ministry. When the church was constituted, they had several preachers in their limits : none of whom however, were called upon by the church to take the pastoral care. They inconsiderately invited a certain William Goodall to become their pastor. He was then a resident of Hampton. He proved the greatest stumbling block of all. Goodall was a man of some talents as a preacher ; But devoid of something more valuable than talents, he blackened the Baptists in Norfolk, more than all his preaching could wipe off, if he were to live an hundred years. He fell into the sin of polygamy, and was put out from among them. Goodall's apostacy, with some other severe calamities that have since befallen them, has apparently almost ruined the Baptist-cause in Norfolk : but if it be the cause of Christ, it must rise again. The gates of hell may annoy ; but cannot prevail against the true church. They have still several ordained preachers among them, but no pastor. Elder Browne has of late undertaken to attend them once a month.

PORTSMOUTH

Was constituted under the pastoral care of elder Thomas Armistead. His labours were much blessed ; and the church grew and multiplied. About 1792, partly from bad health, and partly from other causes, Mr. Armistead resigned his charge. After his resignation, the church declined greatly. They employed Jacob Bishop, a black man of considerable talents, to preach for them. This, as might have been expected, could not answer in Virginia. Elder Thomas Etheredge, and Jacob Grigg, in their turn, served them a small space of time. In 1802, elder Davis Biggs moved into the vicinity of Portsmouth, and became their pastor. Under his watchful care, the church has moved on in a much more tranquil manner.

Elder Armistead, the first pastor of this church,

was a man of high family, and rich connexions. He served as an officer in the American army, during the revolutionary war. He was universally esteemed as an officer of the most unwavering courage. He was also a man of strong mind; and in all likelihood, would have made a figure in the military line, if he had not become a Baptist. This, by lessening his military ardour, as well as rendering him somewhat unpopular in the army, probably prevented that distinction to which he might have been otherwise raised. Few men talked with more pleasure about military movements, than major Armistead.

After his resignation, as above, he was never again as useful. He became a merchant, moved from place to place, and preached whenever he found an opportunity. The Major never could completely shake off his high notions of honour and resentment, imbibed in the army. He was not unfrequently engaged in making arrangements to settle affairs of honour. Invitations from others he would not refuse: he would sometimes offer them on his part. This, with some other matters of disorder, expelled the major, anno 1803, from the Baptist community. He still occasionally preached; but not with much, if any success. In 1809, he was again restored to his membership; and died shortly after. The major was thought by many, in his best days to injure his usefulness, by not rightly dividing the word of truth. He dwelt too much upon the deep and mysterious doctrines of Calvinism. Doctrines hard to be understood; and therefore ought to be cautiously managed.

Elder Biggs, their late pastor, is a sound and ingenious preacher; and esteemed, by his acquaintances, as an exemplary man. He also, has lately moved to the western country.

UPPER BRIDGE.

Nothing singular has occurred in this church.

Elder Jacob Grigg, former pastor of Upper Bridge,

is an Englishman ; who received an education at the Bristol Baptist academy, after he began to preach. When he finished his education, he was sent by the missionary society into Africa. Having some disturbance there, with the governor of the colony, he came to Norfolk in Virginia. After preaching for the church there, awhile, he came to Upper Bridge ; and was there very useful. At length he moved to Kentucky ; and was pastor to one of the most prosperous churches there. But in consequence of the disturbances about hereditary slavery, he again moved to Ohio ; and finally, to Richmond, Virginia ; where he now resides. His high, and perhaps in some respects untenable opinions of civil liberty, involved him in embarrassments both in Africa and Kentucky. Some of his friends are of opinion, that age and experience have corrected these protuberances. His moral character has never been assailed. By all who know him he is esteemed pious and zealous. As a preacher, for deep investigation, for clear and lucid exhibition of divine truth, he is unsurpassed by any preacher in Virginia.

SHOULDER'S HILL.

On the first preaching of the Baptists in these parts, they met with violent opposition. A mob collected at one of their meetings, and seized the preachers Barrow and Mintz, and carried them to a water not far distant. There they dipped them several times, holding them under water until they were nearly drowned ; asking them if they believed. At length, Mr. Barrow replied, *I believe* you mean to drown me. After sporting with them thus, they let them go. Notwithstanding this opposition, the gospel progressed. The church, with some interruptions, has enjoyed peace and prosperity.

WESTERN BRANCH.

This is a small but increasing church. Mr. Bunting, their present pastor, is a native of the Eastern Shore; and is esteemed, both in his new and old habitation, a good man, and a sound preacher.

SOUTH QUAY.

Nothing of note has come to our knowledge as to this church.

BLACK CREEK

Has generally been a happy and peaceful church. They sustained a great loss in the removal of elder David Barrow, in 1797. Since which time, however, they have had the occasional ministrations of others; whose labours have been blessed.

MEHERRIN

Is a daughter of Racoon Swamp, now under the care of Robert Murrell, a pious and exemplary minister of the new testament and a leading man in the Association.

TUCKER'S SWAMP

Is a small new church, under the care of Henry Jones; a preacher of plain, but useful gifts.

SEA COCK.

Nothing remarkable has taken place here.

RACCOON SWAMP

Has been a large and flourishing church. She has been the mother of many ministerial sons. James Bell, Zadoc Bell, Balaam Izzel, John Wall, Randolph Nufam, and William Browne, were raised here.

HIGH HILLS OF NOTTOWAY,

Also a daughter of Racoon Swamp, has nothing remarkable.

SAPPONY

Fell first under the pastoral care of Mr. Rivers, a pious minister; but his life was short. James Bell was then inaugurated pastor. He also, lived but few years, and died. Since his death, they have had no regular pastor; but have been attended by Mr. Browne statedly. They have had some revivals.

MILL SWAMP.

Within the limits of this church, there had been for many years, some Freewill Baptists, as they were termed. Some time previous to the year 1774, several of the Baptist preachers, holding with free grace, preached among them. Their labours proved successful; and a church was constituted. They asked, and obtained the pastoral services of David Barrow. From the time of the constitution, until this time, they have been remarked for their regularity in the preservation of discipline and order. God has been honoured among them. Elder Barrow, their pastor, was called of God to occupy the pulpit at an early period of his life. Having a strong wish to advance the Redeemer's kingdom, he availed himself of every opportunity to improve his mind. He applied himself to reading; and sought instruction from every quarter within his reach. His progress was very considerable. His preaching and conversation were admired. Mr. Barrow had no notion of preaching barely for the sake of being admired. He sought the salvation of men; he sought it earnestly. Receiving from heaven the bread of life, he dealt out to each one his portion, in due season. He travelled and preached far and wide. Jesus was with him, and gave him many seals. His spotless character as a

christian, greatly aided his pulpit labours. All who knew him at all, knew he was a good man. In the time of the revolutionary war, Mr. B. was a warm whig. He exhorted his countrymen to face the enemy; and shake of the yoke of British bondage. He set them the example. When dangers pressed, Mr. B. voluntarily shouldered his musket; joined the army; and was found ready for the field of battle. His unexceptionable deportment, rendered him very popular with all descriptions of men. After the revolution, he was persuaded to accept the office of magistrate. The duties of which, he discharged with fidelity and ability, for some years. Finding this office incompatible with the regular discharge of his ministerial duties, he threw it up; resolving not to be entangled with the affairs of this life.

He carried his opinions of liberty so far, as to think it criminal to hold negroes in slavery. He therefore emancipated all he had. Although this measure proved his disinterested zeal, to do right, it is questionable, whether it was not in the end, productive of more evil than good. While it embarrassed his affairs, at home, by lessening his resources for the maintenance of a large family; it rendered him suspicious among his acquaintances: and probably, in both ways, limited his usefulness. After he removed to Kentucky, it was a source of much vexation. After a life of twenty odd years' usefulness in Virginia, he moved to Kentucky where he quickly distinguished himself as a man of talents, piety, and usefulness. He is still living.

OTTER DAMS,

Is now under the care of Beverly Boothe. He is a preacher of gifts; and respectable among his acquaintances.

ROWANTY

Was formerly under the care of Jesse Lee; a

preacher of information. He died; and they have been since destitute of a regular pastor.

DAVENPORT's

Has very few white members: but being in the vicinity of Petersburg, there are, in that city, a number of people of colour, members. These have built them a meeting house; and carry on their worship regularly, through their preachers of colour. Many of them are said to be very pious and respectable; whilst many others, by their wretched conduct, make the Baptist name a term of reproach.

This is the last association which can now be taken up. Besides those already treated on, there is one other, called Mayo, partly in Virginia, and partly in North Carolina. Concerning which, the documents have unfortunately miscarried. They are now sent for, particularly; and, it is hoped, may arrive time enough to be annexed as a supplement. *See p. 446.*

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BIOGRAPHY.

HAVING finished the history of the associations, churches, &c. we conceive our work would be deficient, if we should not furnish a short Biography of the most distinguished Ministers, who have lived and died faithful to their Divine Master.

We have selected those chiefly, who were remarkable for spreading the gospel in new and strange parts.

The advantages of Biography, are almost indescribable.

Principles however pure, without practice, answer no valuable purpose. A man's life should always be a comment upon his profession. Without this the most unexceptionable theories fall into disgrace. Much more regard is generally paid to the deportment, than to the declarations of professors of religion. Arguments in favor of opinions, are sometimes powerful indeed; but they are seldom so, unless backed by the most powerful argument, good examples.

A man may show his faith by his words; but if he wishes to be believed, he must show it by his works also. Hence the proverb: "example often does

more than precept." Modesty, or rather, humility forbids that any man should hold up his own example for imitation. The examples of others are shown to greater advantage: and the examples of the dead, better than those of the living.

Biography exhibits to public view, the most prominent features of a well spent life, and thereby excites laudable emulation in the readers, to imitate the copy: an emulation scarcely excitable by naked theories.

In writings, both sacred and profane, of all ages of the world, Biography has obtained a respectable place. The books of Job and Ruth, are literal biographies. And in all the historical parts of the old and new testaments, biographical sketches are to be found.

The most able profane writers of antiquity, were sometimes employed in drawing the lives of eminent departed characters; who having acted well the parts allotted them on the stage of life, through the faithful historian, have lived after they were dead: and their meritorious and distinguished actions, set forth, as examples, to future generations. In modern times, likewise, the excellence of great and good men, has not been forgotten through the want of writers capable of transmitting it down to posterity.

It is quite pleasing as well as profitable thus to form an acquaintance with men whose works we admire. The statesman, the warrior, and even the mechanic, or navigator, rising into eminence in his line of action, has found his way down to subsequent ages. And why should not the christian, soaring above his cotemporaries, in acts of disinterested piety and benevolence? Why should not the character, most precious in the sight of God, and most valuable to, but not most valued by men, find a place on the page of some faithful historian. Among most, if not all the christian sects, such men have arisen; and their lives and actions recorded. Some

have been the authors of their own biography ; and to a certain extent, this is undoubtedly very desirable ; but it is obvious, that at least, the finishing stroke, must be put by others.

The Baptists can boast of but few men of great worldly eminence. Like the primitive church, they can say, “not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called ” Some among them, however, have been highly useful in advancing the cause of pure religion.

To depict a few traits in the characters of such, seems properly to occupy some place in a compilation like the present. We will begin with the man who commenced the most distinguished work.*

* Many things already related in the body of the work, will be unavoidably repeated in the Biography ; in order to connect the narrative.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF

DISTINGUISHED BAPTIST PREACHERS

WHO LIVED AND DIED FAITHFUL

IN THE CAUSE OF GOD.

SHUBAL STEARNS.

IN our Biography, it seems most proper, that we should commence with the man who first commenced the work.

Rev. Shubal Stearns was the son of Shubal Stearns; and his mother's first, or maiden name was Rebecca Larriford. He was born in Boston, January 28th, 1706. In about a year after the rise of the Separates in New England, viz. 1745, Mr. Stearns joined them. He became a preacher; and continued among them for about five or six years. But forming an acquaintance with some of the Baptists, he was convinced of the futility of infant baptism. He was therefore baptized on a profession of faith, at Toland in Connecticut, by Rev. Wait Palmer, anno 1751. May 20th, of the same year, he was ordained to the ministry, by said Palmer and Rev. Joshua Morfe. In the year 1754, Mr Stearns and his company moved from New England, believing that God had called

him westward, to do a great work. It does not appear that he started with any certain place in view, on which to settle; but resolved to follow the guidance of the spirit, as it should be manifested to him from time to time. The first place at which he made any stay, was in Virginia, on Opeckon creek, where there was a Baptist church, under the care of S. Heton,* and where he met with Mr. Daniel Marshall his brother in law, just returned from his mission to the Indian country. Mr. Stearns pitched at a place called Cacapon, not far above Winchester. Remaining there a short time, and not finding that ministerial success which his impressions had led him to hope for: he and his company, joined now by Mr. Marshall and his company, removed to North Carolina, and settled at a place called Sandy Creek;† and immediately formed a church.

He continued to labour with great assiduity, aided by Marshall and Breed. So great was their success, that in a little time this little band swelled to more than six hundred. Mr. Stearns's impressions respecting a great work in the west, seemed now to be verifying: and considering subsequent events, he must be an infidel indeed, who can doubt the origin of these impressions.

He was a preacher of some doctrinal talents; but he was more remarkable for his zealous, animating manner. He brought from New England the same tone, gestures, &c. which had distinguished the Newlights in that country.

* Some of our documents represent the Opeckon church as under the care of John Garrard; and we have so represented it in our second page. But in a paper since come to hand, and thought to be taken from Mr. Marshall, by Rev. John Williams, Mr. Heton is said to be minister. See History of Regular Baptists, page 289

† Some of our manuscripts say, that Mr. Marshall moved to a place called Hugwarry, and formed a distinct church; and that neither Stearns nor Marshall came to North Carolina until 1757. But we follow Mr. Leland's manuscript as most probable.

He was of small stature, had a very expressive and penetrating eye, and a voice singularly harmonious. His enemies, it is said, would sometimes be captivated by his musical voice. Many things are related of the enchanting sound of his voice; and the glance of his eyes, which had a meaning in every move. Mr. Stearns continued to discharge the duties of pastor, in Sandy Creek church, until a small time before his death; which took place on the 20th of November, 1771. He lived and died faithful to the important trust confided to him. Mr. Stearns was an orator of the right sort: and the effects of his public speaking upon his hearers, proved it better, than if a thousand finished orations had been published from his lips.

He was sick some time previous to his death; and in the first of his illness expressed some unhappiness at the darkness of his mind; but for a considerable time before his decease, his soul became triumphant; and he expressed a longing desire to depart and to be with Christ.

DANIEL MARSHALL.

Although Mr. Marshall was not a Virginian by birth; nor ever resided long in Virginia; yet, as many of his successful labours were devoted to the inhabitants of Virginia, we cannot forego the pleasure of inserting a short sketch of this excellent man's life. We do this with greater delight, because we have it in our power to transcribe from the eloquent pen of Rev. Mr. Abraham Marshall the amiable son of this venerable man.

This sketch, which we present entire to our readers, was drawn by Mr. Marshall and published in the Georgia Analytical Repository, in 1802. The appendix was, we presume, written by Rev. Mr. Holcombe, the editor of the Repository.

“ In giving a biographical sketch of my honoured father, we must look back to the distance of almost a century. His birth was in the year of our Lord, 1706, in Windsor, a town in Connecticut. He was religiously educated, by respectable and pious parents ; and being hopefully converted at twenty years of age, joined the then standing order of Presbyterians in his native place. The natural ardour of his mind soon kindled into the fire of holy zeal ; and without the advantage of a liberal education, raised him so high in the esteem of his brethren, that they called him to the office of a deacon. In the exemplary discharge of his duty, in this capacity, he continued near twenty years. During this time, in easy circumstances, he married ; and lost a wife, by whom he had a son, named after himself, Daniel ; who is still a useful member of society. At the age of thirty eight years, our worthy parent was one of the thousands, in New England, who heard that son of thunder, Rev. George Whitfield, and caught his terrific fire. Firmly believing in the near approach of the ‘ latter day glory,’ when the Jews, with the fullness of the gentiles, shall hail their Redeemer, and bow to his gentle sceptre ; a number of worthy characters ran to and fro, through the eastern states, warmly exhorting to the prompt adoption of every measure tending to hasten that blissful period. Others sold, gave away, or left their possessions ; as the powerful impulse of the moment determined ; and, without scrip, or purse rushed up to the head of the Susquehanna, to convert the heathens ; and settled in a town called Onnaquaggy, among the Mohawk Indians. One, and not the least sanguine, of these pious missionaries, was my venerable father. Great must have been his faith ! great his zeal ! when, without the least prospect of a temporal reward, with a much beloved wife and three children, he exchanged his commodious buildings, for a miser-

able hut ; his fruitful fields and loaded orchards, for barren deserts ; the luxuries of a well furnished table, for coarse and scanty fare ; and numerous civil friends, for rude savages ! He had the happiness, however, to teach and exhort for eighteen months, in this place, with considerable success. A number of the Indians were, in some degree, impressed with eternal concerns ; and several became cordially obedient to the gospel. But just as the seeds of heavenly truth, sown with tears, in this unpromising soil, began to appear in their first fruits, the breaking out of war among the savage tribes occasioned his reluctant removal to Connogogig, in Pennsylvania. From thence, after finding it much more difficult to benefit scribes and pharisees, than publicans and sinners, he removed to a place near Winchester, in Virginia.

Here he became acquainted with a Baptist church, belonging to the Philadelphia Association ; and as the result of a close, impartial examination of their faith and order, he and my dear mother were baptized by immersion, in the forty eighth year of his life. He was now called, as a licensed preacher, to the unrestrained exercise of his gifts ; and though they were by no means above mediocrity, he was instrumental in awakening attention, in many of his hearers, to the interests of their souls.

Under the influence of an anxious desire to be extensively useful, he proceeded from Virginia, to Hugwarry, in North Carolina ; where his faithful and incessant labours proved the happy means of arousing and converting numbers. Being evidently, and eminently useful, as an itinerant preacher, he continued his peregrination to Abbot's creek, in the same state ; where he was the instrument of planting a church ; of which he was ordained pastor, in the fifty second year of his age, by his brothers in law, Rev. Messrs. Henry Ledbetter, and Shubal Stearns. Soon after receiving this honour, my reverend father travelling at different times, into Virginia, baptized colonel Sa-

muel Harris, with whom he immediately afterwards made several tours, and preached, and planted the gospel in various places, as far as James' river. It was but a few years after his ordination, before, induced by appearances of increasing usefulness, he took an affectionate leave of his beloved charge, and settled on Beaver creek, in South Carolina.

In this place, likewise, a church was raised under his ministry; and until brought to a good degree of maturity in divine things, was an object of his tender and unremitted care and solicitude. At the direction of divine Providence, as he conceived, and as subsequent events have proved, his next removal was to Horse creek, about fifteen miles North of Augusta.

The fruits of his labours in this place remain in a respectable church; some of whose sons, raised up under his care, have successfully diffused the light of divine truth through various benighted regions. From Horse creek my aged father made his first visits to this state. On the second or third of these, while in prayer, he was seized, in the presence of his audience, for preaching in the parish of St. Paul; and made to give security for his appearance in Augusta, on the following Monday, to answer this charge. Accordingly, he stood a trial; and after his meekness and patience were sufficiently exercised, he was ordered to come, as a preacher, no more into Georgia.

In the words of an apostle, similarly circumstanced, he replied, "Whether it be right to obey God, or man, judge ye." Consistently with this just, and spirited replication, he pursued his luminous course: and on the 1st of January, 1771, came with his family, and took up his final earthly residence at the Kioke. The following spring, the church here was formed; and it is famous for having furnished materials for several other churches. For this purpose, many common members have been dismissed, and several ministers ordained. Among these are Rev. Messrs. Saunders Walker, Samuel Newton, Loveless

Savage, Alexander Scott, and the writer of this article. Through God's blessing on the ministry of her indefatigable founder, and pastor, this church continued to lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes; breaking forth on the right hand and on the left; until our beloved country was unhappily involved in the horrors of war. No scenes, however, from the commencement to the termination of hostilities, were so gloomy and alarming as to deter my inestimable father from discharging the duties of his station. Neither reproaches, nor threatenings could excite in him the least appearance of timidity, or any thing inconsistent with christian and ministerial heroism. As a friend to the American cause, he was once made a prisoner, and put under a strong guard. But obtaining leave of the officers, he commenced and supported so heavy a charge of exhortation and prayer, that, like Daniel of old, while his enemies stood amazed and confounded, he was safely and honourably delivered from this den of lions. Even the infirmities of old age, and the evident approach of the king of terrors, were not sufficient to shake his faith or hope; nor, in the least perceivable degree, to abate his zeal.

A few months previous to his decease, rising in his pulpit, which he had frequently besprinkled with his tears, and from which he had as often descended to weep over a careless auditory; he said,

"I address you, my dear hearers, with a diffidence that arises from a failure of memory, and a general weakness of body and mind, common to my years. But I recollect, 'he that holds out to the end shall be saved;' and I am resolved to finish my course in the cause of God."

Accordingly, he attended public worship regularly; even through his lingering mortal illness; until the last sabbath, but one, before his dissolution. In his family, he invariably performed his usual round of holy duties, until the morning immediately preceding his happy change. Fully apprized of this, as

at hand, and perfectly in his senses, he expressed, distinctly and emphatically, his steady and increasing confidence of future bliss.

The following, taken by me, in the presence of a few deeply affected friends and relatives, as he delivered them, were his last words :

“ Dear brethren and sisters, I am just gone. This night I shall, probably, expire. But I have nothing to fear. I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith. And henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. God has shown me, that he is my God ; that I am his son ; and, that an eternal weight of glory is mine !”

The venerable partner of his cares, and, I may add, faithful assistant in all his labours ; sitting bedewed with tears, by his side ; he proceeded :

“ Go on, my dear wife, to serve the Lord. Hold out to the end. Eternal glory is before us !”

After a silence of some minutes, he called me, and said, “ My breath is almost gone. I have been praying that I may go home to-night. I had great happiness in our worship this morning ; particularly in singing, which will make a part of my exercises in a blessed eternity.”

Now, gently closing his eyes he cheerfully gave up his soul to God, with whom, I doubt not he walks, “ high in salvation, and the climes of bliss.”

This solemn event took place at the dawn of the second day of November, 1784, in the seventy eighth year of his age.

A suitable discourse to his memory, was delivered from the above mentioned passage of holy writ, by the late Rev. Charles Buffey.

Whatever infirmities might appear in my certainly eminently pious, and extensively useful father, it would not become me to bring them into view, except it were to show, as might easily be done, that “ e’en his failings leaned to virtue’s side.” And I handle too feeble a pen to delineate the various excel-

lent qualities and graces, which adorned him, in every relation he sustained through life. I will only say,

Tho' no proud pile, learn'd pen, nor letter'd stone,
His virtues rare, to late posterity reveals;
He'll ever shine, and waxingly has shone,
Through rolling years, in ministerial seals.

A. M."

APPENDIX

To the Biography of Mr. Marshall.

In 1748, Mr. Marshall married his second and last wife, Miss Martha Stearns, sister to Rev. Shubal Stearns. Mr. Marshall had the rare felicity of finding in this lady, a Priscilla, a helper in the gospel. In fact, it should not be concealed that his extraordinary success in the ministry, is ascribable in no small degree, to Mrs. Marshall's unwearied, and zealous co-operation. Without the shadow of a usurped authority over the other sex, Mrs. Marshall, being a lady of good sense, singular piety, and surprising elocution, has, in countless instances, melted a whole concourse into tears, by her prayers and exhortations!

Another cause to which Mr. Marshall's distinguished utility is attributable, in a great measure, was his bold and independent method of procedure. With a soul expanded by contemplations on august objects, a boundless ambition directed to a correspondent prize, and the world completely under his feet, he was capable of the most difficult and arduous enterprizes; and could be dismayed by no dangers. Superior to local attachments, he went from place to place, instructing, exhorting, and praying for individuals, families, and congregations, whether at a muster, a race, a public market, the open field, an army,

or a house of worship; wherever he was able to command attention.

Such conduct was, indeed, and may still, by many, be considered irregular; and little less than as favouring of insanity. But if he acted in some of these instances as if he were beside himself, it was for the sake of precious souls: and the fruits of his astonishing exertions have abundantly shown that he was constrained by the love of Christ.

It may possibly be thought that Mr. Marshall was the subject of delusive hopes; and culpably enthusiastic, when he left New England, with a family, to roam under the rising beams of the latter-day glory, as he supposed, for the conversion of souls. But let this matter be fairly considered, and it will appear; that his most sanguine expectations must have, so far, been fully realized. Since the period at which Mr. Marshall commenced his career, those burning and shining lights, Rev. Messrs. Whitfield and Wesley with their zealous associates and numerous followers, have aroused a slumbering world, and liberally shed the lustre of truth in its darkest recesses; thousands of able and evangelical writers and preachers have been raised up, and as many gospel churches formed; a revolution in America has bestowed religious liberty on one quarter of the globe; the man of sin's system has been almost demolished, with a vengeance that makes us tremble; liberty of conscience has made rapid advances in Europe; the shouts of all truly religious denominations, have been mingled at the funeral of bigotry; the scriptures have been translated into several barbarous languages; missionaries have gone out, literally, into all the world; and sinners, of all descriptions, have fallen, by thousands, beneath the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Now, can it be reasonably presumed, that when Mr. Marshall, in the fervour of his piety, exchanged

New England for the Mohawk nation, he expected, that by this time, the kingdom of Christ would be in a more respectable and triumphant state, than is sufficient to make its most formidable enemies gnaw their chains?

As to any special confidence that Mr. Marshall might have in God as engaged to preserve and prosper a family devoted to his service, the reader will probably be of opinion that it could not have been stronger than it was well founded, on running his eye over the following facts:

With pleasure I announce to the christian world, that one of its brightest ornaments, Mr. Marshall's aged and venerable relict, is not only yet in time, but with an uncommon share of good health, enjoys a flow of comfortably cheerful spirits.

Mrs. Marshall, in the enjoyment of all that can render life a blessing, has a pleasant residence in Columbia county, near Augusta, and is surrounded by her step son, Mr. Daniel Marshall, all the children she ever bore, Rev. Abraham Marshall, Messrs. John, Zacheus, Levi, Moses, Solomon, and Joseph Marshall, two daughters, Mrs. Eunice Pittman and Mrs. Mary Willborn, and about fifty grandchildren.

I cannot take leave of this very remarkable and highly favoured family without soliciting Mrs. Marshall's pardon, for the freedom of some of the preceding remarks, which truth and duty urged me to make: and sincerely wishing that my reverend friend Mr. Abraham Marshall, to a greater age than that of his renowned father, may be classed by all, but himself, with the most eloquent, popular, and useful characters in the state of Georgia.

V. S.

SAMUEL HARRISS.

By reverting to the biography of Mr. Marshall, the reader will find that in one of his evangelical journeys, he had the singular happiness to baptize Mr. Samuel Harriss, commonly called Colonel Harriss. Mr. Harriss was born in Hanover county, Virginia, January 12th, 1724. Few men could boast of more respectable parentage. His education, though not the most liberal, was very considerable, for the customs of that day. When young, he moved to the county of Pittsylvania: and as he advanced in age, became a favourite with the people, as well as with the rulers. He was appointed church warden, theriff, a justice of the peace, burgess for the county, colonel of the militia, captain of Mayo fort, and commissary for the fort and army. All these things, however, he counted but dross, that he might win Christ Jesus, and become a minister of his word, among the Baptists; a sect at that time every where spoken against. His conversion was effected in the following way: He first became serious and melancholy without knowing why. By reading and conversation, he discovered that he was a hapless sinner; and that a sense of his guilt, was the true cause of his gloom of mind. Pressed with this conviction, he ventured to attend Baptist preaching. On one of his routes to visit the forts in his official character, he called at a small house, where he understood there was to be Baptist preaching. The preachers were Joseph and William Murphy; at that time, commonly called Murphy's boys. Being rigged in his military dress, he was not willing to appear in a conspicuous place. He seated himself behind a loom. God, nevertheless, found him out by his Spirit. His convictions now sunk so deep, that he could no longer conceal them. He left his sword and other parts of his rigging some in one place, and some in another. The ar-

rows of the Almighty stuck fast in him ; nor could he shake them off, until some time after. At a meeting, when the congregation rose from prayer, colonel Harriſs was obſerved ſtill on his knees, with his head and hands hanging over the bench. Some of the people went to his relief ; and found him ſenſeleſs. When he came to himſelf, he ſmiled ; and in an ecſtacy of joy, exclaimed, Glory ! glory ! glory ! &c. Soon after this, he was baptized by Rev. Daniel Marſhall ; as mentioned above. This probably took place, ſome time in the year 1758. He did not confer with fleſh and blood ; but immediately began his miniſterial labours ; which afterwards proved ſo effectual as to acquire him the name of the Virginia apoſtle.

In 1759, he was ordained a ruling elder. His labours were chiefly confined, for the firſt ſix or ſeven years, to the adjacent counties of Virginia and North Carolina ; never having paſſed to the north of James river, until the year 1765. During the firſt years of his miniſtry, he often travelled with Mr. Marſhall ; and muſt have caught much of his ſpirit. For there is obviously a conſiderable reſemblance in their manner. January, 1765, Allen Wyley travelled out to Pittſylvania, to ſeek for a preacher.* He had been previously baptized by ſome Regular Baptiſt miniſter in Fauquier ; but not being able to procure preachers to attend in his own neighbourhood, and hearing of the Newlights, (as they were called in North Carolina), he ſet out by himſelf, ſcarcely knowing whither he was going. God directed his way, and brought him into the neighbourhood of Mr. Harriſs, on a meeting day. He went to the meeting, and was immediately noticed, by Mr. Harriſs, and asked whence he came. He replied that he was ſeeking a goſpel miniſter ; and God having directed his courſe to him, that he was the man : and that he wiſhed him to go with him to Culpeper. Mr.

* See page 7:

Harriss agreed to go, like Peter nothing doubting but it was a call from God. The effects of his visit may be seen in another part of this work, page 10. After this, three others came from Spottsylvania, to obtain Mr. Harriss's services. He departed into North Carolina, to seek James Read, who was ordained to the ministry. Their labours were so highly favoured, that from that time, Mr. Harriss became almost a constant traveller. Not confining himself to narrow limits, but led on from place to place; wherever he could see an opening to do good there he would hoist the flag of peace. There was scarcely any place in Virginia, in which he did not sow the gospel seed. It was not until 1760, that this eminently useful man was ordained to the administration of ordinances. Why he was not ordained, at an earlier period, is not certainly known. Some say, that he did not wish it. Others, that his opinions respecting the support of ministers, were objected to by the leading elders. After his ordination, he baptized as well as preached.

In every point of view, Mr. Harriss might be considered, as one of the most excellent of men. Being in easy circumstances, when he became religious, he devoted not only himself, but almost all his property, to religious objects. He had begun a large new dwelling house, suitable to his former dignity; which, as soon as it was covered in, he appropriated to the use of public worship: continuing to live in the old one.

After maintaining his family in a very frugal manner, he distributed his surplus income to charitable purposes. During the war, when it was extremely difficult to procure salt, he kept two waggons running to Petersburg, to bring up salt for his neighbours. His manners were of the most winning sort; having a singular talent at touching the feelings. He scarcely ever went into a house, without exhorting and praying for those he met there.

As a doctrinal preacher, his talents were rather below mediocrity; unless at those times when he was highly favoured from above: then, he would sometimes display considerable ingenuity. His excellency lay chiefly in addressing the heart: and perhaps even Whitfield did not surpass him in this. When animated himself, he seldom failed to animate his auditory. Some have described him, when exhorting at great meetings, as pouring forth streams of celestial lightning from his eyes; which, whithersoever he turned his face, would strike down hundreds at once. Hence he was often called Boanerges. So much was Mr. Harris governed by his feelings, that if he began to preach, and did not feel some liberty of utterance, he would tell his audience he could not preach without the Lord; and then sit down. Not long before the commencement of the great revival in Virginia, Mr. H. had a paralytic stroke; from which he never entirely recovered. Yet this did not deter him from his diligent usefulness. If he could not go as far, he was still not idle within that sphere allowed him by his infirmities. At all associations and general committees where he was delegated, he was almost invariably made moderator. This office, like every thing else, he discharged with some degree of singularity, yet with general satisfaction.

For some short time previous to his death, his senses were considerably palsied. So that we are deprived of such pious remarks, as would probably have fallen from this extraordinary servant of God in his last hours.

He was somewhat over seventy years of age when he died.

The remarkable anecdotes told of Mr. H. are so numerous, that they would fill a volume of themselves, if they were collected. A part of them only we shall record.

Mr. H. like Mr. Marshall, possessed a soul incapable of being dismayed by any difficulties. To obtain his

own consent to undertake a laudable enterprize, it was sufficient for him to know that it was possible. His faith was sufficient to throw mountains into the sea, if they stood in the way. He seems also never to have been appalled by the fear or the shame of man. He could confront the stoutest son of pride, and boldly urge the humble doctrines of the cross. Like the brave soldier, if beaten back at the first onset, he was still ready for a further assault. So that he often conquered opposers, that, to others, appeared completely hopeless. With this spirit he commenced his career.

Early after he embraced religion, his mind was impressed with a desire to preach to the officers and soldiers in the fort. An opportunity offered in fort Mayo; and Mr. Harris began his harangue; urging most vehemently the necessity of the new birth. In the course of his harangue, an officer interrupted him, saying, "Colonel, you have sucked much eloquence from the rum cask, to-day: Pray give us a little; that we may declaim as well, when it comes to our turn." Harris replied, 'I am not drunk;' and resumed his discourse. He had not gone far, before he was accosted by another, in a serious manner: who, looking in his face, said, "Sam, you say you are not drunk; pray are you not mad, then? What the devils ails you!" Colonel Harris replied, in the words of Paul, 'I am not mad, most noble gentleman.' He continued speaking publicly and privately, until one of the gentlemen received such impressions as were never afterwards shaken off. He became a pious christian.

At another time, a captain Ball, in the county of Culpeper, came to a place where Mr. Harris was to preach, and said to him, "You shall not preach here." Another replied, "But he shall." From this sharp contention of words, they proceeded to a sharper contest of blows and scuffles. Friends on both sides interested themselves; some to make

peace, and others to back their foremen. The multitude divided. Colonel Harris's friends took him into a house. Lewis Craig was to guard the door, while Mr. H. was preaching. Ball's gang came up and drove the centinel from his stand. The day ended with nothing but confusion.

On another occasion, he was arrested and carried into court, as a disturber of the peace. In court, a captain Williams vehemently accused him as a vagabond, a heretic, and a mover of sedition everywhere. Mr. Harris made his defence. But the court ordered that he should not preach in the county again, for the space of twelve months; or be committed to prison. The colonel told them that he lived two hundred miles from thence; and that it was not likely that he should disturb them again, in the course of one year. Upon this he was dismissed. From Culpeper he went into Fauquier; and preached at Carter's run. From thence he crossed the Blue ridge; and preached in Shenandoah. On his return from thence, he turned in at captain Thomas Clanahan's, in the county of Culpeper, where there was a meeting. While certain young ministers were preaching, the word of God began to burn in colonel Harris's heart. When they finished, he arose and addressed the congregation: "I partly promised the devil, a few days past, at the courthouse, that I would not preach in this county again in the term of a year. But the devil is a perfidious wretch; and covenants with him are not to be kept: and therefore I will preach." He preached a lively, animating sermon. The court never meddled with him more.

On one occasion, in Orange county, one Healey pulled him down as he was preaching; and dragged him about, sometimes by the hair of the head, and sometimes by the leg. His friends rescued him. On another time, he was knocked down by a rude fellow, while he was preaching. He went to preach to the prisoners once, in the town of Hillsborough,

They locked him in ; and kept him there for some time.

Colonel Harriss did not suffer as many persecutions as some other Baptist preachers. Tempered in some degree peculiar to himself, perhaps his bold, noble, yet humble manner, dismayed the ferocious spirits of the opposers of religion.

When he first began to preach, his soul was so absorbed in the work, that it was difficult for him to attend to the duties of this life. A man owed him a sum of money, which he actually stood in need of, to defray the expenses of his family. He went to the man, and told him he would be very glad if he would discharge the debt he owed him. To which the man replied, he could not pay him the money. Harriss said, I want the money to buy wheat for my family. You have a good crop by you, I had rather have wheat than money. The man answered, 'I have other uses for my wheat.' How, then, said Mr. H. do you intend to pay me? I never intend to pay you, until you sue me, replied the debtor.

Mr. Harriss left him, meditating : Good God, said he to himself, what shall I do? Must I leave preaching to attend to a lawsuit! Perhaps a thousand souls will perish in the mean time, for the want of hearing of Jesus. No! I will not! Well, what will you do for yourself? What? I will sue him at the court of heaven.

Having resolved what to do, he turned aside into a wood ; and fell upon his knees, and thus began his suit :

"O blessed Jesus! thou eternal God. Thou knowest, that I need the money which the man owes me, to supply the wants of my family ; but he will not pay me without a lawsuit. Dear Jesus, shall I quit thy cause, and leave the souls of men to perish? Or wilt thou, in mercy, open some other way of relief?"

In this prayer, Mr. H. found such tokens of di-

vine goodness, that to use his own words, “ Jesus said unto him, Harriss ! keep on preaching, and I will become security for the payment.”

Mr. H. having his debt thus secured, thought it most proper to giye the debtor a discharge. Accordingly he shortly after, passing by to a meeting, carried a receipt in full to the man’s house ; and gave it to his servant, desiring him to give it to his master. On his return by the house, after meeting, the man hailed him at his gate ; and said, Mr. H. what did you mean by the receipt you sent this morning ?

Mr. H. replied, I meant just as I wrote.

Well, but I have not paid you, answered the debtor. Harriss said, True ; and I know also, that you said, you never would, without I got the money at the tail of an execution : But, Sir, I sued you in the court of heaven ; and Jesus has agreed to pay me. I have therfore given you a discharge !

This operated so effectually upon the man’s conscience, that in a few days he prepared and sent to Mr. H. wheat enough to discharge the debt.

Note. Some of the christian worldlings of the present day, will say, Aye ! but this will not do often. We answer, The principle is correct, at all times ; viz. to commit our grievances to our heavenly Father, and trust him for a full recompense. How differently do those brethren act, who, for the mere pelf of this world, not only go to law with the wicked, but with their own brethren ! And sometimes, in order to gain their point, will strive to blast their reputation in open court ! For the honour of religion, it must here be added, that these things have seldom (we wish we could say never) occurred among the Baptists.

In 1787, a lady once asked him at meeting, when the people were much exercised with weeping, &c. if he did not think there was more hypocrisy than any thing else in it. He replied, No ! And drew out a dollar, saying, Now, Madam, if you will shed

Some of these hypocritical tears, I will give you this dollar. She could not produce a tear.

A criminal, who had been just pardoned at the gallows, once met him on the road and showed him his reprieve. Well, said he; And have you shown it to Jesus? No, Mr. Harris, I want you to do that for me. The old man immediately descended from his horse, in the road; and making the man also alight. They both kneeled down Mr. H. put one hand on the man's head, and with the other held open the pardon. And thus, in behalf of the criminal, returned thanks for his reprieve; and prayed for him to obtain God's pardon also.

A volume might be filled with entertaining anecdotes respecting this venerable man. Let these suffice.

JEREMIAH WALKER.

Rev. Jeremiah Walker was born in Bute county, North Carolina, about the year 1747. He possessed rare and singular talents. When but a small boy, although descended from rather obscure parentage, and having very little education, he was remarkably fond of reading and improving his mind. He was also noticed, as a boy of very moral and virtuous habits. When quite young, he embraced vital religion; and, being baptized, soon began to preach. The few Baptist preachers that were then in the ministry, were very illiterate. Mr. Walker of course had very little chance of improving his small stock of literature, from their conversation. The invincible energies of his genius, towered above every obstruction. He quickly shone forth with so much splendour as to make it questionable, whether the obscurity of his education, as well as the unlearnedness of his society, did not, by leaving his mind unhackled from scho-

lastic dogmas and from critical strictures, rather advance, than impede his real greatness. After preaching in his native neighbourhood, and in Pittsylvania county, Virginia, for some few years, he was induced by the new church called Nottoway, formed in Amelia county, Virginia, (now Nottoway) to move down and take the pastoral charge of them. This took place, anno 1769. Here he became very conspicuous. Great talents seldom fail of great success. Mr. Walker, though pastor of Nottoway church, disseminated his evangelical principles far and near. He was almost incessantly employed in preaching the gospel. In a few years, aided by others, particularly certain young preachers of his own raising, he planted between twenty and thirty churches south of James river. In these were also, a considerable number of gifted characters, who afterwards became distinguished preachers. All of whom, were either brought to the knowledge of truth through his ministry, or were nurtured under his fostering hand after they were brought. All who knew him about this time, coincide in ascribing to him every thing that is desirable in a minister of the gospel. In talents as a preacher, he was equalled by few of any denomination. His voice was melodious: his looks were affectionate: his manner was impressive and winning: his reasoning was close and conclusive: his figures were elegant, well chosen, and strictly applicable. All of which advantages were heightened by the most unaffected simplicity. In private conversation, he was uncommonly entertaining and instructing to all; but especially to young preachers. Affable with all sorts of people, he was beloved and admired as far as he was known. Besides this, he was considered by all his acquaintances exemplarily pious; and no doubt was so at that time. No spot nor wrinkle was found in his character.

So distinguished a man among the despised Bap-

tists, could not long escape the notice of their opponents. When persecution began to arise, the enemies of the cross soon cast their eyes upon Jeremiah Walker. Him they viewed as the champion. 'If we can but silence him, said they, the whole host beside, will hide themselves in dens and caverns.' Accordingly Mr. Walker was arrested in Chesterfield county, by virtue of a warrant from a magistrate: and after examination, was committed to jail. Mr. Walker's patience, humility, and uniform prudence and piety, while in prison, acquired for him the esteem of all whose prejudices would allow them to think favourably of a Baptist. He kept a journal or diary when confined; in which are some of the most pious and sensible reflections.

When Mr. Walker came out of jail, he stood, if possible, in higher estimation than he had done before. Wherever he went to preach, he was attended by a large concourse. And from his preaching, the most beneficial consequences were constantly produced.

Here, alas! we could willingly drop the pencil, and leave the picture with these bright colourings. Our wishes cannot be indulged. Candour compels us to forego the desire. Like the inspired historians, we must not only exhibit the goodness and the greatness of God's people, but their foibles and their follies too. They told of David's rise; they told of his downfall likewise. No maxim is more surely established by experience and observation, than that, high delights are fraught with great dangers. God hath set adversity over against prosperity. And whenever a man in any character arises to distinguished eminence, he may look for some downfall, unless he watch his steps with a commensurate vigilance.

Mr. Walker had arrived to a degree of distinction, far above any of his associates. In whatever direction he might travel, he was hailed by many as father in the gospel. Cared for by his friends; admired by all,

even by his enemies; invited to the society of the great; very influential, and, indeed, all powerful in associations and other places among the Baptists: Still young and inexperienced, it will not appear strange to an experienced mind, that this man, thus standing on a pinnacle, should tilt over.

Oh popular applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet, seducing charms!
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution, in thy gentlest gales.
But, swelled into a gust, who then, alas!
With all his canvass set, and, inexpert
And therefore heedless, can withstand thy power!

In every good, there will be some evil. The plain, familiar, affectionate manners of the Baptists in those days, under suitable restrictions, were surely favourable to vital piety. This habit, however, among the unsuspicious and incautious, exposed them to snares; into which too many fell. It would have been happy for Mr. W. if he had observed somewhat more of etiquette; especially among females. Their fondness for his company, under the pretence of religious affection, was often nothing more than carnal love in disguise. He was ultimately entrapped. In the year 1774, he attempted a criminal intrigue with a young woman; for which he was excluded: but soon again restored on account of his apparently deep contrition. His deportment after this, was so correct for some years, that he had almost regained his former standing. But, lamentable to relate, about the year 1784, or 1785, he fell into a similar transgression; in which, things were carried much farther than in the first. He was immediately excluded from fellowship. He sunk down into the utmost contempt. His name sounded with infamy far and near. The friends of religion were abashed beyond expression; while their enemies triumphed, as if the Baptists had sunk never to rise again. In no great while

after this wretched event, he moved to Georgia; from whence, in the year 1788, he visited Virginia; professed to be again restored to divine favour; and petitioned the church from which he had been excluded to reinstate him in his membership. After some impediments were removed, he was received as a member, and also permitted to resume his ministry.

The sequel of his life is an almost continual struggle against the prejudices of both church and world. *The sword never departed from his house.* After his restoration, his morals were correct: for in truth, except the above sin, no other seems to have been capable of producing a momentary temptation to his mind.

He became an Arminian, after his downfall; and thereby excited among the Georgia Baptists, no small degree of contention. Finally, however, they split; Mr. Walker, with a small party, formed a distinct society, called General Baptists. The others were called Particular Baptists; in allusion to the doctrine of general and particular redemption, holden by them. Just the same in name and principle, as the kinds of Baptists in England. In 1791, he travelled into Virginia, and attended the association holden by the Middle District, at Cedar Creek, in Lunenburg. From thence he went to the General Committee,* in Goochland; and then went through various parts of the state, leaving his pamphlets and his verbal arguments in favour of Arminianism, whithersoever he went. In this journey of Mr. Walker, those who associated with him, found him still the same pleasant, sensible, instructing, genteel character, that he had formerly been.

Alas! alas! that so splendid a garment should be so spotted!

In his last illness, he endured, with remarkable fortitude and christian resignation, the most excruciating and acute sufferings. He died September 20th,

* See account of that General Committee, page 81, &c.

1792. Rev. Abraham Marshall preached his funeral sermon from Zechariah 11th ch. and 2d ver. "Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen."

Mr. Walker married Miss Jane Graves, in North Carolina, when very young. They lived together in great harmony for many years. After he went to Georgia, she died; and he married a widow lady. With whom he lived also in strictest harmony. For, his slips to the contrary notwithstanding, he was exceedingly affectionate and kind in his family.

Besides his Fourfold, &c. he published many other small treatises at different times. Some of which were celebrated for their cleverness and ingenuity. (See further account of him, page 81).

DUTTON LANE.

Mr. Dutton Lane was born November 7th, 1732, near Baltimore, in Maryland. At what time he became a resident of Virginia, is not known. But he was baptized by Shubal Stearns, anno 1758. He was ordained to the ministry, and, probably, to the care of Dan River church, October 22d, 1764; having commenced public speaking immediately after he was baptized. Mr. Lane was not a man of much learning; but having a strong constitution, a loud voice, and fervent spirit, he did great things *in the name of the holy child Jesus*.

Unenlightened as the Virginians were, at that time, it was not to be expected that he would be allowed to go in peace. His own father was among the first to set his face against the Baptists generally, and against Dutton, his son, in particular. He once pursued him with an instrument of death, to kill him. It fell out however, that instead of killing his son, he was himself slain by the sword of the Spirit: from which he soon after revived with a hope of eternal life; and

was baptized by that very son whom he had persecuted.

One William Cocker had conceived such malignity against the Baptists, that he was accustomed to say, that he would rather go to hell than heaven, if going to heaven required him to be a Baptist. But falling accidentally, where Mr. Lane preached, he was struck down with deep conviction; from which, being delivered by converting grace, he became a pious Baptist. Mr. Lane continued preaching until his death: but the latter part of his life was somewhat obscured by his adopting and maintaining certain strange opinions. By diving into subjects not revealed, and rather neglecting those which were obvious and plain, he was much less thought of. He lived and died a pious man, however, in the estimation of those who knew him well.

WILLIAM MURPHY.

Mr. William Murphy was among the earliest of the Baptist preachers raised in Virginia. His talents were viewed as very considerable for that period. He and his brother Joseph were called, by way of derision, *Murphy's boys*. It was at one of their meetings, that colonel Harriss was brought to a full sense of his danger; as mentioned in his biography. William Murphy was not only an experimental preacher, and in that way, of great usefulness; but when the disputes about free will and free grace, ran so high in the associations, in 1775, &c. William Murphy was found among the ablest disputants in support of the doctrines of free grace.

After continuing his ministrations in Virginia and North Carolina, for a good many years, he then moved to the western country; and from thence, a few

years since, he passed over Jordan and entered the land of rest.

JOSEPH MURPHY.

Mr. Joseph Murphy, brother to the last mentioned gentleman, and who also became a fellow labourer with him in the vineyard of Christ, is still living in Surry county, North Carolina; and is about seventy six years of age.

He was not thought to possess talents equal to his brother, yet was esteemed a man of strong natural parts; which were wholly neglected until he turned religious. Then he sought for knowledge of every sort by which he could promote the cause of truth. He learned enough of letters to enable him to read and to preach his bible. He possessed ready wit and a bold and intrepid spirit; by which things he often foiled his adversaries without converting them. As a disciplinarian, he was thought judicious and useful. He was once taken up, and carried before a magistrate for preaching; but he defended himself so expertly, that the magistrate bade him go about his business. He is now respected as a venerable old man.

ELIJAH BAKER.

He was born anno 1742, in the county of Lunenburg, of honest and reputable, but not opulent parents. When grown to the years of maturity he was much addicted to frolics and sport of all sorts. Going to hear Mr. Jeremiah Walker preach, he became thoroughly convinced of the necessity of vital religion. His volatile disposition, nevertheless kept him from seeking for it. However resolved, when under

preaching, all his resolutions would fail at the sound of the fiddle, or the cordial invitation of his pleasant, but carnal companions. He at last came to a determination to give his old companions one more frolic, and then forsake them forever. This resolution he kept; and was no more to be found among the sons of carnal pleasure. He listened now, not to the music of the violin, but to sublimer music, the faithful preaching of the gospel. Thus giving up the world, after many previous ineffectual efforts, his convictions soon became exceedingly sharp and pungent. Sometimes he was so convulsed as not to be able to stand. Heaven ultimately smiled; and Mr. Baker was constrained by the love of God now shed abroad in his heart, to make a profession of grace; and was baptized, anno 1769, by Mr. Samuel Harris. Illiterate as he was, he immediately commenced public speaking. When he first made a profession, he was remarked for being often cast down with doubts respecting the reality of his conversion. This, by the bye, did not hinder him from making great exertions, first as an exhorter and singer, and then a preacher. Having exhorted about twelve months, his first labours were laid out, chiefly in the county of his nativity and the adjacent ones, where he was happily instrumental in planting and watering several churches. After about three years, he gave up all worldly cares, and devoted his whole time to preaching and other ministerial duties. About 1773, he began to stretch his lines, and to travel more extensively. Coming down into the lower end of Henrico, he, in conjunction with one or two others, planted Boar Swamp church. Then, as his way would be opened, he extended his labours gradually downwards; and was ever instrument in planting all the churches in James City, Charles City, York, &c. Then, crossing over York river into Gloucester, preached in the lower end of that coun-

ty with considerable success. There, he formed acquaintance with Mr. Thomas Elliott, then resident of Gloucester, but who had not long before moved from the Eastern Shore. Mr. Elliott, discovering a beauty in religion, felt his heart's desire that his brethren in the flesh might be saved. Accordingly, spring, 1776, they set sail, and arrived on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, on Easter Sunday; and went immediately to church, where an established clergyman was, that day, to preach and administer the sacrament. After waiting for some time, and finding the minister did not come, Mr. Baker told the people that he would preach for them, if they would go down to the road. The novelty of the scene excited their attention, and the people went. Mr. B. had no other pulpit than the end of a horning tree; which having mounted, he began one of the most successful ministerial labours, that has fallen to the lot of any man in Virginia. Many wondered; some mocked; and a few were seriously wrought upon. He continued his ministrations, from house to house, for several days. And when he left them, he appointed to return again at Whitsuntide. At his second visit, he was accompanied by his brother Leonard; who was at that time only an exhorter. When they arrived, they were informed that the minister of the parish had appointed to preach against the Baptists, and to prove them to be in an error. Mr. Baker and his company went to hear him. His arguments were ineffectual. The people followed Baker. He preached that night at a Mrs. Hunt's. His brother continued with him about a week. They had meeting both day and night. The effects were not remarkable at first; but at every meeting there were good appearances. This encouraged Mr. E. Baker so much, that he resolved to remain there for some time. His brother left him labouring in the vineyard. His labours were greatly blessed. He became at once almost a resident; for indeed filled as

he was with increasing solicitude for the prosperity of the gospel, he could not be found elsewhere, than at the places where he had evidences that God called him. After he married, he settled in Northampton county.

In doing so much good, it fell to Mr. Baker's portion (as generally happens) to give offence to the enemy of souls and his subordinate agents. They put him into Accomack prison, and kept him there many days. The most atrocious attempt was that of seizing him by a lawless power, and carrying him on board of a vessel in the adjacent waters; where they left him: having contracted with the captain to make him work his passage over the seas, and then leave him in some of the countries in Europe; alledging that *he was a disturber of the peace*. This took place on Saturday night. He was immediately put to work, and kept at it until late at night. The next day, being Sunday, he asked and obtained leave of the captain to sing and pray among the crew. The Captain attended; and was convinced that he was a good man. Without delay he set him on shore. In the mean time, his friends had despatched a messenger to the governor, to obtain authority to prevent his being carried forcibly away. This they obtained; but Mr. B. was discharged before his return. He met with various kinds of persecution: which only served to confirm his faith, and whet his zeal in his Redeemer's cause.

Mr. Leland, in a letter to the compiler, makes the following remarks respecting this blessed man:

"Is it possible for you to get the biography of Elijah Baker? He began his career in Mecklenburg, or near that place: was cotemporary with John Williams and first ordained in a church of that place: then came to Boar Swamp, and, with J. Anthony, planted that church: then to Charles City, James City, and York, where he also planted churches: thence he crossed the Mockjack bay, and did the like, in a

part of Gloucester, called Guinea: thence over the bay to the Eastern Shore of Virginia and Maryland, where he constituted the first ten Baptist churches in those parts.

He was a man of low parentage, small learning, and confined abilities. But with one talent, he did more than many do with five. If justice could be done his memory, the detail would make a rich page in your intended history. At the last Salisbury Association, which he attended when nearly worn out with disease, at the close of the meeting he addressed the audience in a manner as if heaven and earth were coming together; then, returning to Mr. Lemon's, soon died."

He had declined in health a considerable time before his death; and having a wish to see his brother Leonard, of Halifax, Virginia, to whom he was fondly attached; he wrote him a letter, dated September 21st, 1798; of which the following is an extract:

"——— And now, brother, are you struggling through the trials of this life, leaning upon your Beloved? Labouring, and waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them according to his glorious body? Or have you got into a lukewarm state, which I fear has been too prevailing amongst some!

"Dear brother, some of my complaints are such, that I do not expect to continue long in this world: However, I leave that to my dear Redeemer, who has the power of life and death in his own hands. But in all probability, I shall never be able to come out as far as your house again: yet, dear brother, I should be very glad to see you, if you could make it convenient to come over once more, while I live. I will pay all your expenses. And if our dear mother is yet alive, I can send out some relief to her. As to religion, thanks be to God, there is some little stir amongst us. I have baptized eight lately."

It seems, his brother could not go immediately;

but started in a few weeks; and arrived just time enough to see him die: which took place, November 6th, 1798.

As he died at Doctor Lemon's, it will be most suitable to quote the Doctor's own words respecting him, in a letter to the compiler. "In Mr. Baker, I found the Israelite indeed, the humble christian; the preacher of the gospel in the simplicity of it; and the triumphant saint, in his last moments. In his preaching, he was very plain; and generally experimental: always very express on the doctrine of regeneration: never entering upon the doctrines by which he conceived he should give offence to one or another. In his last illness, I attended his bed side, day and night, for three weeks: and had many most agreeable conversations with him, on the glorious things of the kingdom of Christ. He retained his senses to the last minute; and seemed rather translated, than to suffer pain in his dissolution. Death was to him as familiar in his conversation, as if he talked of an absent friend from whom he expected a visit."*

He was twice married. His first wife was Sarah Copeland; a lady of respectable connexions: by whom he had one son, now living. She died; and he then married a widow lady, on the Eastern Shore; who had no child by him.

* In the same letter, the Doctor mentions Mr. Philip Hughes; who also died at his house, and who was in his day a man of note in the ministry, both on the Western and Eastern Shore: but as his candle rather went out in darkness, it will not be profitable to say much about him. By way of caution to young ministers, they may be informed, that by marrying he became rich, by being rich he became proud and careless; an Antinomian in principle, and intemperate in practice. His last years were a blot upon his first. *Tell it not in Gath, &c.*

JOHN WILLIAMS.

He was born in the county of Hanover, anno 1747. He was of a very respectable family, and received a tolerable education. In the month of June, 1769, when acting as a sheriff of Lunenburg, he was awakened to know and to feel his sin and his danger. He became a convert; and shortly after, lifted up his voice to exhort his fellow men to flee from the wrath to come. He was not baptized until the first Sunday in February, 1770. He continued to exhort, until some time the following summer; when he ventured to take a text; and from that time commenced preacher. December, 1772, he was ordained to the ministry, and took the care of Meherrin church. His gifts, at first, were far from being auspicious. Many pronounced that he would never be a preacher: so delusory are the first efforts of the mind.

He not only succeeded in becoming a preacher, but in becoming a first rate preacher, at least, in the estimation of most of his acquaintances.

He was exceeding fond of reading and writing; and indeed was generally studious: by which means, he greatly improved his mind.

When he first commenced preacher, he was zealous, active, and laborious in the ministry; travelling and propagating the gospel in different parts. He may well be numbered among the fathers in Israel. His talent, however, was not employed so much in breaking down the bars of prejudice in new and unenlightened places, as in directing and regulating the young converts when gathered by others. Pleasing, affable, and refined in his manners, he had a hand to smooth off some of those protuberances left by rougher workmen. In associations he was expert with his pen, as well as wise to offer counsel. He acted as clerk to the General Association; and when they di-

vided the association into districts, a unanimous vote of thanks was offered Mr. W. for his faithful and skilful services as clerk of the association. He also discharged the duties of clerk to the Roanoke Association until a little time previous to his death. He introduced several excellent regulations both into the General and Roanoke Associations, for the government of churches, &c. Few men understood church discipline better, or were more successful in building up large respectable churches wherever he attended. For many years he acted as pastor to four churches, whom he attended monthly. He was in high estimation both as a man and a minister. Even the enemies of the Baptists, would often except Mr. W. from their reproaches. In his temper towards those of other religious persuasions, he was remarkably liberal. Indeed, by some of his acquaintances it is said, that he was friendly to open communion; but that he was restrained from putting it into practice, by his tenderness for his brethren; most of whom differed from him on this head. This liberality of spirit did not prevent him from maintaining his own principles with great firmness, whenever an occasion offered. It was such an occasion as this, which drew forth his reply to Mr. Patilloe's* sermon on infant baptism. He committed his arguments to writing, with an intention of printing them in the form of a pamphlet; but as nothing came out on the other side, and as so much had been already published on that subject, it was not put to the press.

In his preface he makes the following remark:

“I hope I have sufficiently demonstrated to my countrymen, for a series of years, that I am not overbearing on others, or bigoted to my own principles which are not essential to salvation; but have uniformly endeavoured to promote a catholic spirit, with peace and concord, in the Israel of God. But nevertheless I am set for the defence of the gospel;

* A celebrated Presbyterian Preacher.

and as such, circumstances often occur, that involuntarily lead me forth to contend for the faith and order of Christ's church."

He was generally upon the best terms with the Presbyterians; who were pretty numerous in his neighbourhood.

His talents, if not equal to any, were certainly very little inferior to those of the first grade.

His appearance in the pulpit was noble and majestic, yet humble and affectionate. In the beginning of his discourses, he was doctrinal and somewhat methodical: often very deep, even to the astonishment of his hearers. Towards the close, and indeed, sometimes throughout his sermon, he was exceedingly animating. His exhortations were often incomparable. At an early period, he became very corpulent. At an association, in the year 1793 he accidentally fell by the turning of a step, as he was passing out of a door, and became, for a year or two, a cripple; being under the necessity of going on crutches. Notwithstanding this, he would still go in a carriage to the meetings, and preach sitting in a chair in the pulpit. During several of the last years of his life, he was afflicted with a very painful disease. Under his severe suffering, he was not only patient, but, when he could have any mitigation of his pain, he was also cheerful. About ten days before his death, he was attacked by a pleurisy; from which, no medicine could give him relief. His work was finished; and his Master had called for him. On the 30th day of April, 1795, he fell asleep.

Nothing very remarkable transpired at his death: He was pensive and silent. He told his wife, that to live or die was to him indifferent: he had committed this to God, who, he knew, would do right. He said he felt some anxiety for his numerous family; but that these also, he was willing to trust in the hands of a gracious Providence.

January, 1768, he was married to Miss Frances Hughes, of Powhatan county; by whom he had fourteen children; of whom, eleven were living, at the time of his death: and of these, four professed religion, and were baptized.

JAMES READ.

So much has already been said of Mr. Read, in our account of the first rise of the Baptists in Spotylvania, &c. that we may now be much shorter. He was born about the year 1725 or 1726. His father lived from the time Mr. R. was about seven years old, on the Shenandoah river. He had early and awful alarms about eternal things, when nothing more than a boy. He says, that when bound an apprentice he would often call upon God, on particular emergencies; and that he often had the most manifest answers to his prayers. Once he states, that having permission from his master to go and see his parents, he came to a creek so much swelled that he could not pass. Being much distressed he fell upon his knees and prayed to God to help him over. After a little time, a horse that was feeding near at hand, actually came to where he was: believing him to be sent of Providence, he mounted him without saddle or bridle. He carried him over; and then dismounting, the horse immediately returned. These answers of prayer increased his religious impressions, so that to many he appeared to be running into melancholy.

It was not until he had commenced a man of family, and had, in a great measure, shaken off his serious thoughts, that he met with the New-lights as they were called in North Carolina, to which place he had moved about the same time that

Stearns and his party came. Under Mr. Marshall's preaching, he was first wrought upon according to the gospel plan. After some struggles against it, he finally became a Baptist: probably as early as 1756 or 1757. When he first professed, he could neither read nor write. He immediately began to learn, his wife being his instructor. Of his subsequent labours and usefulness, and also his downfall, see a full account, page 9, &c. After his excommunication, in Spottsylvania he went on home, called Grassy Creek church together, of which he was a member, made confession of his guilt and professed repentance, a majority were willing to excuse him; but doing every thing by unanimity, they called for helps. Not giving satisfaction, his excommunication was confirmed. This took place, Nov. 21, 1770. He made no attempt for restoration until the next July; when he was rejected; the church not thinking his repentance evangelical. His next attempt was July, 1772: he was again rejected; and for the same reason. On the 7th of September, the church calling for helps, he was restored to membership; and in November, he was restored to the free exercise of his ministry. We have detailed the particulars more at large, because Mr. Read was certainly a distinguished preacher in the first rise of religion, and likewise to show how cautiously they acted in those days.*

He was never as useful after his restoration. He however, continued to preach; and was esteemed by most of his acquaintances, a sincere christian, and as a father in the gospel; although he had shamefully, though for a short time, departed from the right way. He tells us in his manuscript, that about 1791, he was stirred up of God, to travel through the churches in Virginia, and to endeavour to encourage them to zeal and perseverance. Though infirm in body he made the attempt. He says he was kindly

* This account is taken from Grassy Creek church book.

and respectfully received by the brethren wherever he went; and that his labours were blessed to the desired end.

For about thirty years before his death, he used to say, that he had a presentiment of his death, and that it would not take place until he was seventy two. And after that, he should look for death every day. From want of education, he did not not know the precise year when that would happen, but said it was one of 2 years. Accordingly, in the year 1798, which was about the time expected, he finished his course. His death was glorious indeed. He declared, not only a willingness, but an anxiety to depart and to be with Christ. His last words were, (turning to a friend standing by), "do you not see the angels waiting to convey my soul to glory?"

He lived and died a poor man, having generally a large family.

JOHN WALLER.

No character has as yet passed before us, more worthy of notice than the present.

He was born, December 23d, 1741, in Spotsylvania county; was a descendant of the honourable family of Wallers in England. At a very early period, he manifested a great talent for satyrical wit. This determined his uncle, who had the direction of his education, to bring him up for the law. He was put to a grammar school; and made an encouraging advancement in the dead languages. His uncle's death, and his father's narrow resources, added to his own unbridled inclinations to vice, prevented him from finishing even his classical education. He now began indeed to study, not the laws of the land, but those of the gaming table. Letting himself loose to every species of wickedness and profanity, he quickly acquired for himself the infamous appellation of, *Swear-*

ing Jack Waller : by which he was distinguished from others of the same name. So far did he indulge his mischievous temper, that he once had three warrants served on him at the same time, on account of one uproar. It was frequently remarked by the common people, "that there could be no deviltry among the people, unless Swearing Jack was at the head of it." He was sometimes called, *the Devil's adjutant* to muster his troops. To these, may be added, his fury against the Baptists. He was one of the grandjury who presented L. Craig for preaching. This happily terminated in his good. Craig, in order to turn their mischievous intentions into something beneficial, watched the dismissal of the grandjury; and in order to gain their attention, more certainly, bought them a mug of grog. After he had gotten them together, he began, "I thank you, gentlemen of the grandjury, for the honour you have done me. While I was wicked and injurious, you took no notice of me; but since I have altered my course of life, and endeavoured to reform my neighbours, you concern yourselves much about me. I have gotten this mug* of grog, to treat you with; and shall take the spoiling of my goods joyfully." When Mr. W. heard him speak in that manner, and observed the meekness of his spirit, he was convinced that Craig was possessed of something that he had never seen in man before. He thought within himself, that he should be happy if he could be of the same religion with Mr. Craig. From this time, he began to attend their meetings. And was found of the Holy Spirit. The commandment came and he died. He saw and felt himself a sinner. He now, for the first time, except in blaspheming, began to call upon the name of the Lord.

* Mr. Craig was remarkably pious and zealous; availing himself of every opportunity to inculcate the gospel of Christ. He knew the grog was the most certain way to command the attention of the grandjury, to whom he desired to offer a lecture. "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

His convictions were deep and pungent. He ate no pleasant bread and drank no pleasant water, for seven or eight months. He was almost in despair. He relates his exercises in the following words :

“ I had long felt the greatest abhorrence of myself ; and began almost to despair of the mercy of God. However, I determined in my own soul, never to rest from seeking, until it pleased God to show mercy or cut me off. Under these impressions, I was at a certain place, sitting under preaching. On a sudden, a man exclaimed, that he found grace ; and began to praise God. No mortal can describe the horror with which I was seized at that instant. I began to conclude my damnation was certain. Leaving the meeting, I hastened into a neighbouring wood, and dropped on my knees before God, to beg for mercy. In an instant, I felt my heart melt, and a sweet application of the Redeemer’s love to my poor soul. The calm was great ; but short.”

From this time, he felt some increase of strength ; yet at some times, he felt the enemy break in upon him like a flood ; and he would be almost ready to give up his hope. But the application of these words gave him great comfort : “ Who is among you that feareth the Lord ; that walketh in darkness and hath no light ; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” *Isaiah 50. 10.* And again : “ By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”

By the time Messrs. Harriss and Read came on their next tour, he felt sufficiently confident to become a candidate for baptism ; and going up into Orange county, was there baptized by Mr. Read, some time in the year 1767. Baptism was to him, as it has been to thousands, a sanctified ordinance. His soul received great accession of strength and comfort. Christ was revealed in him. Having contracted debts by dissipation, he sold property to pay them. He conferred not with flesh and blood ;

but began to preach, that men ought every where to repent. It was not long before his labours became effectual, at least, in one way. That arch enemy of souls, whom he had served so faithfully before, now began to roar in hideous peals against him. He succeeded in raising up a powerful opposition.*

At length, it was thought proper to constitute a church, in Mr. Waller's neighbourhood; who making choice of him as pastor, he was ordained to the work of the ministry, June 20th, 1770. He now began to lengthen his cords. Bending his course downwards, he baptized Rev. William Webber, being the first he did baptize. October, 1770, accompanied by J. Burrus, he travelled down as far as Middlesex, (see the account, page 13). Wherever he went, he was attended by a divine power; turning many to righteousness. His name sounded far and wide. By the ungodly, he was considered as a bold, inexorable fanatic, that would do much mischief unless restrained. The Baptists and their adherents looked upon him as set for the defence of their cause; and with much confidence rallied around him, as their leader. His persecutions and imprisonment in Caroline, in Middlesex, in Essex, &c. have been already mentioned in our General History.

In this bright and burning way, Waller continued until 1775 or 1776; when, he formed an acquaintance with one Williams, a preacher of some talents, apparent piety, and in Mr. Wesley's connexion, consequently an Arminian: this man, by his conversation and books, so wrought upon Mr. Waller's mind, as to bring him over to believe the Arminian system. Knowing this to be contrary to the opinions of his brethren, he resolved to make a bold effort to preach and argue his principles at the next association; and thereby convince his brethren; or failing in this, to

* See a full account of his persecutions, in our General History, page 15, and elsewhere.

submit to be cut off from them. Accordingly, he took his text, 1 Cor. 13. 11. In his exordium, he stated, that when young and inexperienced in religion, he had fallen in with the Calvinistic plan; but that becoming more expert in doctrine, or in the language of his text, when he became a man, he put away these childish notions. He then went lengthily into the argument. For want of truth, or for want of talents, he made few, if any converts to his opinions; and of course, had to confront the whole host of preachers and members now assembled. Mr. Waller, foreseeing his fate, took the shorter and more reputable course. Instead of awaiting a fair trial, he proclaimed himself an independent Baptist preacher. This step was probably resorted to by Waller, under an expectation that his popularity was so great, that he should be able to bring over many of the churches to his party. Be it as it may, he immediately commenced his operations on an extensive plan. On his return from the association, he used his utmost endeavour to form a strong party. He preached from house to house; spread his wings over a large field of ministerial labour; ordained lay elders in every neighbourhood, to prevent inroads; and also several helps in the ministry. He also established what he called camp meetings; in which, they continued together several days, under certain written regulations, of which the following is an extract.

Camp-Meeting Regulations.

I. No female, on any account whatever, shall be permitted to stay in the camp, later than an hour by sun at night; nor appear in the camp, earlier than an hour by sun in the morning.

II. The persons in the camp, shall depend for sustenance, during the camp meeting, on the friendly hospitality of the neighbourhood.

III. Any person in camp, waking at any period of

the night, may pray or sing, without disturbing the slumbers of others.

The novelty of these meetings, excited the attention of the people in such a manner, that great multitudes crowded after him.

By these means, his party gained strength daily. Few men possessed greater talents for heading a party of this description, than Mr. Waller. The only thing in which he was deficient, was, that he could not be happy while separated from his brethren. He used to say, that in the midst of apparent prosperity and the caresses of his friends, he still yearned after the people of God from whom he had withdrawn. Some years after his restoration, he said to a young preacher who was dissatisfied, and talked of dissenting, "If you could have a distant view of my suffering and leanness of soul, while a dissenter from my brethren, you would never again indulge such a thought." He was again fully reinstated in connexion with his brethren, in 1787; when a full union between Separates, Regulars, and Independents, was accomplished.*

A very great revival commenced under Mr. Waller's ministry, in 1787. This continued for several years; and spread through all his places of preaching. In this revival he was greatly engaged; and baptized from first to last, many hundred. Early in this revival, Mr. A. Waller, son of his brother Benjamin, was brought in; and in some few years began to preach. Mr. Waller immediately recognized him as his successor; and declared that he believed his work in that part of the earth was finished. Accordingly, November 8th, 1793, after taking the most affectionate farewell of the churches, he moved his

* A partial restoration had taken place some years before this; so that Mr. Waller and his party met in association, with the Separate Baptists.

family to Abbeville, in the state of South Carolina. This removal was said to have arisen, partly from economical considerations, and partly from a strong desire on his own, and on the part of his wife, to live near a beloved daughter; who had some time previously, married Rev. Abraham Marshall, of Georgia. Perhaps there might be other causes. His labours in his new residence, were also blessed; but not to a great extent. He remained, however, faithful in the cause, until his death; which took place, July the 4th, 1802.

His death was, as might be hoped and expected, truly glorious. His eldest son describes it, in the following words:

“His conflict with death, as it respected bodily affliction, was truly hard; but his soul appeared to be happy indeed! Never did I witness such a resignation and christian fortitude before! He was reduced to a perfect skeleton; and, in several places, the skin was rubbed off his bones. His pains appeared to be excruciating; but no murmur was heard from his lips. On the contrary, he would often say, ‘I have a good Master; who does not give me one stroke too hard, or one too many.’

“The last sermon he preached, was on the death of a young man. The text on which he preached, was Zechariah 2. 4. ‘Run speak to this young man.’ He addressed himself chiefly to youth; in feeble, but animating strains: observing that he counted upon its being the last sermon he should ever preach; and fervently prayed, that, Sampson like, he might slay more at his death than he had done in his life. He continued speaking until his strength failed him. And with reeling steps, he advanced to a bed; where we thought he would have expired. From thence he was removed home in a carriage, for the last time. He said, as to his soul, he was under no concern; as he had given it to Jesus long,

since: and he was under no doubt but what his Master would provide a mansion for it. Just before his departure, he summoned all his family around him, black and white; and told them, he was anxious to be gone and to be present with Christ: and then warned them to walk in the fear of God; cordially shook hands with all; and soon after, with a pleasant countenance, breathed his last and fell asleep in Jesus." I looked on the corpse, with these words fresh in my mind:

"O lovely appearance of death."

Thus this great man of God, conquered the last enemy and ascended to *that rest, that remaineth for the people of God*. He died in the sixty second year of his age; having been a minister of God's word for about thirty five years: having in that time, lain in four different jails, for the space of one hundred and thirteen days, in all; besides buffetings, stripes, reproaches, &c. Nor was his labour in vain in the Lord. While in Virginia, he baptized more than two thousand persons; assisted in the ordination of twenty seven ministers; and helped to constitute eighteen churches. For many years, he had the ministerial care of five churches; to whom he preached stately.

As a preacher, his talents in the pulpit, were not above mediocrity; but he was certainly a man of very strong mind. His talents for art and intrigue, were equalled by few. This he exercised sometimes, as it was thought, beyond the innocence of the dove. He was perhaps too emulous to carry his favourite points; especially in associations. Yet it must be owned, that such influence as he acquired in this way, he always endeavoured to turn to the glory of God.

He had been married to Miss E. Curtis, previous to his becoming religious. By her he had a number

of children ; some of whom the old man had the happiness to see profess the same faith with himself.

JAMES CHILES.

In every generation, there will be some odd and eccentric religious men ; who, like Sampson and Jonah, do much good, with a considerable mixture of evil. Mr. Chiles is an instance of this sort of men. Before he embraced religion, having a sturdy set of limbs and a resolute spirit, he often employed them in bruising his countrymen's faces. He was likewise a gambler. But God, who is rich in mercy, plucked him as a brand from the burning. However converted in things of greater consequence, he was never converted from his oddness. He was a member of the first Separate Baptist church north of James river. He was remarkably fond of visions : by which he pretended to be taught of God how every matter was to eventuate. It happened, however, like the Trojan prophets, if he had the gift of prophecy, his contemporaries had not the gift of faith. So that it availed him nothing. His weakness in this particular, if it was a weakness, was happily more than countervailed by his zeal and his success in the ministry. He was the first instrument of planting the gospel upon Bluerun. He also broke the way into Albemarle ; where many were converted under his ministry. In various other places, God set seals to his ministry. After a few years, he moved to South Carolina : where he planted a large church. He retained his notions about visions, to his last day. Report says, that after meeting with misfortunes, and being reduced in his property and health, he went to the house of a woman, and told her, that his God said, he must die there that day. She said, I hope not, Mr. Chiles. Yes, said he,

my God says so: but, however, I will return a while, and consult my God again!

He returned; and, returning said, Yes, Madam, my God says I must die to-day.

The woman again expressed doubts. She said, You look too well, Mr. Chiles, to die so soon.

He said, I will try my God once more. After retiring for some time, in prayer, he came back, and said, It is fixed; the decree is irrevocable; to-day I must die in your house. Having so said, he stretched himself upon the bed, and yielded up the ghost.

JOHN PICKET.

Mr. Picket was born in King George county, January 14th, 1744, of respectable parentage. He had, when grown to the years of maturity, a very strong propensity to gaming and sports of every kind. He followed the business of a dancing master; and probably with a view to get business in that line, as well as to indulge his propensity for sport, he went off about the year 1764 or 1765, to Pee Dee, in North Carolina. God intended this tour for a very different purpose. While there, he fell in at one of the meetings of Josiah Murphy, one of the earliest Baptist preachers in those parts. Murphy spoke a word in season to this prodigal. He came to himself. He began to loathe the now worse than husky sports and pleasures to which he had been devoted. He went to his father, and was feasted with the fatted calf, and clothed with the best robe. He was baptized by J. Murphy, anno 1766. So soon as he felt the smiles of his heavenly Father, he wrote to his earthly parents, in Fauquier; informing them of this marvellous change. They were swallowed up with astonishment. To them, it was strange indeed, that

this their son that they thought was lost, should become so fervently pious ; while their other sons, that they had always with them, continued to be the same. This letter produced some alarm in the family ; and some good effects. Mr. Picket continued in North Carolina, for some time ; being unwilling to leave the society of those to whom he was united by ties stronger than death. He did not return to Fauquier until after the death of his father, in 1767. When he came, finding his friends and neighbours overshadowed with ignorance, he began to warn them, commencing first with private conversation and exhortation, then to hold family worship. Then to have little meetings, and address them by way of exhortation. Those exertions being crowned with success ; many being convicted and some converted, he took texts and commenced preacher. Mr. Picket then procured a visit from Mr. Murphy, who came to Fauquier and baptized a few. The work spread far and near. Mr. Picket being fervent in spirit, and thus encouraged, held not his peace, day nor night ; but proclaimed boldly the things of God. In the fall of 1768, Messrs. Harriss and Read came and baptized thirty seven more ; and constituted them into a church, November 12th, 1768, under the name of Carter's Run. Mr. Picket was ordained, and took the care of this church, May 27th, 1772.* His zeal and activity could not pass unnoticed by the enemies of the cross. The mob broke into the meeting house and split to pieces the pulpit and table ; while the magistrates issued their warrant and seizing Mr. Picket thrust him into Fauquier prison. There he continued for about three months preaching through the grates, and admonishing as many as came

* We have a manuscript from the Carter's Run church, and another from Mr. Leland, taken when he lived in Virginia, and, probably from the lips of Mr. Picket ; which specifies the exact date of these occurrences. We have, therefore, followed Mr. L.'s manuscript, as to dates.

to him, to repent and turn to God. The word of God was not bound. Great numbers were awakened under his prison labours. This imprisonment took place about 1769. When he was turned out of prison, he seemed to increase in zeal; and extending his labours round about in Culpeper, and over the Blue ridge, where he was so successful, that, on the first baptizing that was supposed ever to have taken in Shenandoah, as many as fifty were baptized. He was never wearied in well doing; but continued steadfast to the end. We will now close our account of him, in the words of the manuscript furnished by one of the members of his own church:

“He stood sound in faith, calling on sinners to repent; not sparing his own, but gave his labours to the Lord and to his fellow men; and went on with zeal and courage. Towards his latter days, his zeal for the good of souls seemed to increase. Infirmary appeared to urge on him, attended with deafness. About June, 1803, he told his wife that his work was finished; tenderly beseeching her and his children, to serve the Lord. And so fell asleep.”

Well might the unrighteous, but enlightened prophet, wish to die the death of the righteous.

ELIJAH CRAIG.

Mr. Craig was one of the first converts to the Baptist preaching. He had been awakened through the preaching of elder David Thomas, previous to 1765; and at that time, viz. January, 1765, Mr. Allen Wyley procured the attendance of elder Samuel Harriss, by travelling to Pittsylvania. When Mr. Harriss came and preached an experience of grace, he found his heart could testify to the truth of it; having sometime previously experienced a change, which he had not viewed as conversion, but only the

encouragement of heaven to go on to seek. He was now so strengthened, that, in conjunction with certain young converts in his neighbourhood, who were of the Regular Baptists, he undertook to exhort, &c and to hold little meetings in the neighbourhood. His tobacco house was their chapel. Being most of them labouring men, they used to labour all day, and hold meetings, almost every night, at each other's houses, and on Sundays, at the above mentioned tobacco house. By these little prayer and exhortation meetings, great numbers were awakened, and several converted. For further account see page 8 and 9.

Mr. Craig was constituted into the first Separate Baptist church in those parts, viz Upper Spotsylvania; and was afterwards taken off with the constitution of Bluerun, to which he was consecrated pastor. He was certainly a great blessing to Bluerun church: for under his care they flourished. He was accounted a preacher of considerable talents for that day; which, united to his zeal, honoured him with the attention of his persecutors. They sent the sheriff and posse after him, when at his plough. He was taken and carried before three magistrates of Culpeper. They, without hearing arguments pro or con, ordered him to jail. At court, he, with others, was arraigned. One of the lawyers told the court, they had better discharge them; for that oppressing them, would rather advance, than retard them. He said, that they were like a bed of camomile; the more they were trod, the more they would spread. The court thought otherwise, and determined to imprison them. Some of the court were of opinion that they ought to be confined in a close dungeon: but the majority were for giving them the bounds. Mr. Craig says they were fed on rye bread and water, to the injury of their health. After staying there one month, preaching to all who came, he gave bond for good behaviour, and came out. He was

also confined in Orange jail, at another time. He was a preacher of usefulness for many years after he commenced ; but finally falling too much into speculations, his ministry was greatly hindered. In 1786, he moved to Kentucky ; where continuing his speculations, he became obnoxious to the church ; and was excommunicated, anno 1791. How long he stayed out, is not known. He was, however, restored ; and continued in the church until the year 1808 ; when he died.

He was naturally of a censorious temper ; and always seemed better pleased to find out the faults than the virtues of mankind. This, however, so long as he was warm in religion, was checked by a superior principle ; but after he declined in his religious exercises and became a speculator, he could seldom be pleased. As good a proof as any that could be named, of this peevish temper, may be gathered from two pamphlets, his only writings that have ever reached us. In the one, he undertakes to prove that stationed preachers or pastors of churches, are precluded, by the scriptures, from receiving any compensation for their services. In this pamphlet, he takes so many opportunities to condemn preachers for being money seekers, that it would seem the main design of the publication was to indulge a fault-finding temper. His other pamphlet was a personal philippic against Jacob Creath, on account of some private dispute between Creath and a Mr. Lewis ; who is said to be very respectable. Without knowing anything as to the merits of the case or the provocation given by Mr. Creath ; candour compels us to say, that no provocation can justify the style of this pamphlet. It is written with a pen dipped in poison. The Baptists are a free people ; and every one says and does that which seemeth right in his own eyes. But it is to be hoped that the present, nor any other generation will ever witness another publication written in the style or temper of the above pam

phlet ; and that, too, by one Baptist preacher against another.

LEWIS LUNSFORD.

We now come to the man, who, in point of talents, as a preacher, was never excelled in Virginia ; and by many it is doubted whether he ever had a superior any where else.

Mr. Lunsford was born in Stafford county, Virginia, of indigent parents. He received a very slender education indeed ; nor had he the means to enlarge it. The God of nature furnished him with powers to surmount all obstacles. To obviate the want of education, he used after working all day, to read till late at night, by firelight. At an early stage of his life, while attending the ministry of William Fristoe, he was happily arrested by divine mercy. Mr. Fristoe baptized him when a boy. He immediately, both in private and in public, began to stand up as an advocate for the gospel. His talents, at this tender age, commanded attention, and procured for him the flattering appellation of *The Wonderful Boy*. After moving in a more confined circle for some few years, he began to enlarge his borders. About 1774, divine Providence directed his attention to the lower counties ; in the Northern Neck. Wherever he placed his foot as a preacher, there attended a blessing. Believers were added to the church, through his instrumentality, in most of the neighbourhoods of these lower counties. His preaching made a great noise ; not only for its ingenuity, but for its novelty. Here, as in most other places where the Baptists preached, they cried out that some new doctrine was started ; that the church was in danger. Mr. L. was accounted worthy to share a part of this opposition. A clergyman appointed a set day to preach against

the Anabaptists. Crowds attended to hear him. He told stories about Jack of Leyden, and Cromwell's roundheads; but he could not by such tales, stop the gospel current, now swelling to a torrent. When Mr. L. preached again in the same parts, they attacked him by more weighty arguments. A constable was sent with a warrant to arrest him. The constable, with more politeness than is usual on such occasions, waited until Mr. Lunsford had preached. His fascinating powers palsied the constable's hand. He would not, he said, serve a warrant on so good a man. Another man took it, and went, tremblingly, and served it. Mr. Lunsford attended the summons, and appeared before a magistrate. He was held in a recognizance to appear at court. The court determined, that he had been guilty of a breach of good behaviour; and that he must give security, or go to prison. He was advised to give security; under the expectation of obtaining license to preach. He tried; but could not. He often regretted that he had taken this step; and was sorry he had not gone to prison. This took place in Richmond county.

After the repeal of the law for establishing one sect to the exclusion of the rest, a banditti attended Mr. Lunsford's meeting, with sticks and staves, to attack him. Just as he was about to begin to preach, they approached him for the attack. His irreligious friends, contrary to his wish, drew stakes out of a fence to defend him. This produced a great uproar and some skirmishes. Mr. Lunsford retired to a house. The persecutors pursued him. He shut himself up; and they were not hardy enough to break in to him. One of them desired to have the privilege of conversing with Mr. L. with a view of convincing him. He was let in; and did converse. When he came out, he wore a new face. His party asked him the result. You had better converse with him yourselves, said he.

It was not until January, 1778, that Mr. Lunsford became a settled preacher, and took the care of Mo-

ratigo church, constituted at that time. He held it as an opinion, that imposition of hands by a presbytery, was not necessary to ordination ; but that the call of a church was sufficient. It was in this way he took the care of Moratigo church. He never would submit to be ordained by the imposition of hands ; although the refusal produced no small discontent among the Baptists ; as may be seen in our account of the General Committee and Associations. In 1779, he married his first wife ; and became a resident of Northumberland. From the time he settled in the Northern Neck, and, indeed, from the time he began to preach there, he gradually increased in favour with the people. It is hardly probable that any man ever was more beloved by a people when living, or more lamented when dead. He had two remarkable revivals of religion in the bounds of his church. The one, about the time of the constitution of the church, and the other commenced in the year 1788 ; and had scarcely subsided at his death in 1793. During these revivals, he was uncommonly lively and engaged. He preached almost incessantly : and by his acquaintances, after the last revival, it was thought that he made a rapid advance in the improvement of his talents, both in wisdom and warmth ; especially the latter, from which he never receded, during his residence on earth. Certain it is, that during several of the last years of his life, he was more caressed, and his preaching more valued, than any other man's that ever resided in Virginia. Lunsford was a sure preacher. He seldom failed to rise pretty high. In his best strains, he was more like an angel than a man. His countenance, lighted up by an inward flame, seemed to shed beams of light wherever he turned. His voice, always harmonious, now seemed to be tuned by descending seraphs. His style and his manner so sublime and so energetic, that he seemed indeed like an ambassador of the skies, sent down to command all men every where to

repent. He was truly a messenger of peace ; and by him the tidings of peace were communicated to multitudes. So highly was he estimated among his own people, that there were but few preachers that visited them, to whom they would willingly listen, even for once, in preference to their beloved pastor. He was also clever in conversation ; having a considerable share of wit ; which in his cheerful moments he would use in an innocent, but entertaining manner. In argument, he inclined somewhat to be satirical : and by this means, sometimes gave offence to those who did not know him well. It was, however, perfectly clear, that he did not design to sport with the feelings of any. For it is not likely that any man of his popularity, ever had fewer permanent enemies. He was very fond of reading ; and retained what he read so correctly, that few men could make more extensive quotations than Mr. Lunsford. For his own advantage, he had procured and read some distinguished treatises on medicine. He also kept family medicine. So capacious were his faculties, that with these small opportunities, he actually became so skilful in the administration of physic, that he was often called on to attend patients at a considerable distance. To all such applicants, he not only rendered his services gratis, but often furnished medicine. He had the care of a large and opulent church, of whom some were very liberal in their contributions : by a great part of them he was too much neglected. For the want of this and of his own attention to his secular affairs (through his ministry) he was in but narrow circumstances. Yet, he lived well ; and rendered to every man his just dues. But now, painful as the task is, we must add, that Lunsford died. This great, this good, this almost inimitable man, died, when only about forty years of age. He lived in a sickly climate, and had frequent bilious attacks. These were sometimes very severe. For two or three years before his death, he laboured under re-

peated indispositions, even when travelling about. His manly soul would never permit him to shrink from the work, so long as he had strength to lift up his voice. Sometimes, after going to bed as being too ill to preach, prompted by his seraphic spirit, he would rise again, after some other person had preached, and deal out the bread of life to the hungry sons and daughters of Zion.

He was a shepherd indeed. The Dover Association, for the year 1793, was holden at Glebelanding meeting house in Middlesex county. This was nearly opposite to Mr. Lunsford, and, the river excepted, probably not more than fifteen or eighteen miles from his house. Although just rising from a bilious attack, he would not stay from a place where his heart delighted to be, and where he had the best ground to believe he could do good. He went; and appeared so much better, that he made extensive appointments to preach in the lower parts of Virginia. He was chosen to preach on Sunday; and he did preach indeed. On Tuesday he came up to King and Queen, and preached at Bruington meeting house, from these words: *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober.* It was an awakening discourse, worthy of this masterly workman. On that day, he took cold and grew worse. He however preached his last sermon the next day evening: Observing when he began "It may be improper for me to attempt to preach at this time; but, as long as I have any strength remaining, I wish to preach the gospel of Christ; and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you. He then preached his last sermon from: "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" He continued to grow worse, until, having arrived at Mr. Gregory's in Essex, he took his bed, from whence he was carried to the grave. In his sickness, he was remarkably silent; having very little to say, which he could

avoid. He was fond of joining in prayer: and sometimes exerted his now relaxed mind, in making remarks worthy of such a man. He expressed some anxiety, at the thought of leaving his helpless family; but appeared quite resigned for the will of heaven to take place. On the 26th of October, 1793, he fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, aged about forty years. Rev. Henry Toler preached two funeral sermons for him. One at the place of his death, another at Mr. Lunsford's meeting house, in Lancaster county, called Kilmarnock. These two sermons were printed in a pamphlet: and, annexed to them, were two handsome elegies, written by ladies of his church.* It seemed to be a mystery to many, why God should have called home, so great, so useful a man in the bloom of life. Those who thought proper to offer reasons or conjectures for explaining the ways of Providence, seemed generally to agree, that Mr. Lunsford's popularity as a preacher had risen too high. The people, wherever he was or where he was expected, seemed to have lost all relish for any other man's preaching: That, God knowing the capacity of most of his servants, was unwilling that the lesser lights should be so much swallowed up by the greater. Perhaps the better way is to form no conjecture about it; but rest persuaded, that the ways of God are always wise; however unaccountable to man.

He was twice married. He had by his first wife one surviving child. By his second wife, he left three children.

WILLIAM WEBBER.

Mr. Webber is also one of the fathers in Israel. He was born, August 15th, 1747, of parents in the middle line of life. His education was but slender;

* Another was written by Rev. A. Broadus, which was much admired.

having been sent to school only three years. At sixteen years of age, he was put apprentice to a house-joiner. After he had served his time out, he continued to work at his trade, until God called him to be a workman for him. In October, 1769, he went to hear the Baptists preach. He was awakened to know his danger: and his spirit took no rest from that time until about six months after, he obtained a hope of salvation; and was baptized, June 1770, by elder John Waller, then just ordained. He had, as was usual about that time, exercised a gift in exhortation, previous to his being baptized. Of his further progress, his ordination, &c. see the account in the General History, and, also, of Dover church.

Few men in Virginia, suffered more persecutions, than William Webber. He was first seized in Chesterfield county, December 7th, 1770, and imprisoned in that county jail until March 7th, 1771; just three months. In August, the same year, he was taken off the stage, in Middlesex county, and put into prison; where he was confined forty five days; having the bounds a part of the time. In both these prisons, he and his fellow sufferers used to preach through the grates, regularly twice a week, to such as would come to hear. Besides these imprisonments, he was often very roughly treated, by the sons of Belial, at different places. All of which, this man of God bore, with christian patience and meekness. Although he was in narrow circumstances, he used when young, to devote a great deal of his time to preaching: and being much respected and beloved, he was an instrument of doing a vast deal of good. As he grew older, and his family larger, he found it necessary to limit his labours chiefly to his own and the adjacent neighbourhoods. He was still very successful in turning many to righteousness; and in confirming the souls of the disciples. Mr. Webber was a man of talents, though not in the pulpit: there he was hardly up to mediocrity. He was a man of sound and

correct judgment; well acquainted with mankind; well versed in the scriptures; sound in the principles of the gospel, and ingenious in defending them against error. As a companion, he was remarkably agreeable: he was lively, pleasant, and cheerful yet without levity. His conversation was chiefly upon the subject of religion: to which, he had a turn for directing the attention of his company, without permitting it to be irksome. In his church, he was greatly beloved by his members, and all who knew him. He was remarkably plain, both in his dress and manners. His chief excellency, however, was in associations and public bodies. He was made moderator of the General Association, as early as the year 1778. And although there were many older ministers than himself, for several years after, yet he seldom attended an association or General Committee but he was placed in the chair. His address, either in the chair or out of it, was far from being accomplished. But, still, he was preferred before men of far more refined powers; on account of his soft, yet manly, affectionate, and unaffected method. It is likely, that less affectation was never in any man than in William Webber. You always saw him in his true colours. About the year 1799, he had a severe and long spell of sickness, which had well near brought him to his grave. He did, however, recover; but his constitution was so shaken, that he was never as healthy afterwards. He failed to attend the Dover Association, 1807, being then ill. He recovered so far as to go out some small distance from home; but relapsing, he lingered for some months; and then 29th day of February 1808 he yielded to the king of terrors, but who had lost his terror, as to him. In his last illness he enjoyed great, very great religious consolation. Elder Watkins of Powhatan visited him some little time before his death. In his conversation he said to him with many tears. "Brother Watkins, I never had so glorious a mani-

festation of the love of God in all my life as I have had since my sickness. O ! the love of God."

SIMEON WALTON.

He was a man of note, in his day and generation. In point of education, he had opportunities above many of his companions in the ministry. Having a relish for literary pursuits, he improved his mind above what might have been looked for from his school learning. Being a good mathematician, he was appointed to discharge the duties of county surveyor, in Amelia the place of his residence, for a length of time. Being a ready scribe, he was clerk to the Middle District Association, for many years. There was a considerable intimacy between him and elder John Williams. They were kindred spirits. As a preacher, he was thought to be above mediocrity: though in this character, he did not shine as brightly as might have been expected, considering his cleverness in other points. He resided in Nottoway church, as pastor, for many years. But in 1795, he moved to Kentucky; where, in March, 1798, God took him to himself. He was a good and faithful servant.

JAMES IRELAND.

James Ireland was a native of Scotland. He emigrated to Virginia after he had arrived to the age of manhood. He had serious and religious impressions, from an early period of life. Having some poetical genius, he sometimes occupied his talent upon serious subjects. God, who works in a

mysterious way, made this the medium of an effectual call. By revising one of his religious poems, he was struck with a deep sense of the guilt of sin. After passing through very severe and pungent convictions, he obtained a hope of eternal life. His godly sorrow worked repentance not to be repented of. He was baptized among the Separate Baptists, in one of the earliest tours made by Messrs. Read and Harris. He had preached previous to his baptism; a thing not uncommon at the first rise of the Baptists in Virginia. After he was baptized, he soon became eminent as a preacher. His first labours were in Culpeper and round about those parts. He finally moved over the Ridge, and took the care of several churches. (See the table of the Ketocton Association.) His manner of preaching was highly pleasing to his hearers. Being a man of considerable learning, his style was handsome, though plain: and his manner was affectionate and tender. Frequently deeply affected himself, with his own views of the momentous subjects which occupied his lips, his thirsty audience also led up by the streams which flowed from their preacher, drank sweetly of the heavenly fountain. He was an eloquent man. His eloquence however, was not of the flashy kind, consisting of fair words and fine speeches, the enticing words of man's wisdom. He was above it. But in simplicity and goodly sincerity, he preached Jesus Christ, and him crucified. His arguments were close and pertinent. His exhortations were warm and pathetic.

After labouring in the Lord's vineyard about forty years, he fell asleep in the spring of 1806, at his own house, in Frederick county, having sustained with fortitude, a long and severe illness. His loss was grievously felt by the churches and congregation to whom he ministered. It is no easy matter to supply the place of such a man as Mr. Ireland.

Mr. Ireland was a man of too much distinction to

escape the notice of the enemies of the cross. He was often opposed, and frequently treated very roughly by them. He was once arrested while preaching, and thrown into Culpeper jail. While in close confinement, some of the more malignant burnt at the prison windows, red pepper or some kind of nauseous substance, with a view to suffocate him with the smoke. It almost cost him his life. Escaping, however, with his life, he never regained his constitution; being always afterwards subject to disordered bowels, and other distressing infirmities. Gracious heaven! that ever such a man as James Ireland should be so far in the power of such unprincipled miscreants! Mr. Ireland bore all the scoffs and buffetings of the ungodly, as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus ought to do. He suffered with him here; and, doubtless, he now reigns with him in glory.

JOHN MEGLAMRE.

Mr. Meglamre was born in some of the northern states, June 7th, 1730; and moved to North Carolina previous to his becoming a Baptist. About 1764, or 1765, he joined the Baptists and became a preacher. After labouring some years as pastor of the Kehukee church, he moved to Sussex county, Virginia; and there, by his pious exertions in the Redeemer's kingdom, raised a very numerous church. He was a man of very correct principles, morals, and manners; and greatly respected and beloved as far as he was known.

In the Portsmouth Association he acted as moderator, whenever he was present; as he had also done in the Kehukee, previous to the division. He yielded his soul into the hands of him who gave it, December 13th, 1799.

He lived the life of the righteous ; and, doubtless, in his latter end, realized the gain of godliness.

JOHN CORBLEY,

Was a native of Ireland ; and while a boy, agreed to serve four years for his passage to Pennsylvania. When his time expired, he came to Virginia, and settled in or near Culpeper ; where he became a convert to true religion, under the ministry of James Ireland. After his conversion, he became so noted, that the enemies of the cross considered him worthy of a prison. He was accordingly put into Culpeper jail, where he staid a considerable time. The exact year in which he was imprisoned, is not known ; but it was probably previous to 1770 : for in 1769 he was a delegate from Mountain Run church in Culpeper, to the Ketocton Association ; and acted as clerk of the association. His name does not appear on the minutes again, until 1775 ; when he comes as a representative of a church called Goshen, in Redstone settlement, Pennsylvania. It appears that he had moved there several years previous to this ; and in conjunction with Isaac Sutton, had planted the first three or four churches in the Redstone settlement. His first wife was a Papist, and was married to him previous to his profession of religion. She proved a thorn in his side, during her life. She died ; and he married a most amiable woman, by whom he had seven children. But, how delusory is all earthly bliss ! The Indians, for many years, were exceedingly troublesome in the Redstone country. Mr Corbley and his wife and children, on a Sunday morning, started to walk to the meeting house, less than half a mile from his house. After going a small distance, it was found that his bible, which he had given his wife to carry, had been forgotten. He went back after

it. On his return to overtake his family, he saw two Indians running; one of whom made a direful yell. He suspected something bad; and ran to a fort about half a mile off, and obtained assistance. When they came to the place, he found his wife killed with a tomahawk; and the infant which she had in her arms thrown across her breast, with its brains dashed out against a tree. Three of the other children were killed, and two scalped and wounded that afterwards recovered. Only one, a little girl, escaped unhurt. She was attacked, but a dog seized the Indian that was pursuing her; by which she got into the bushes and hid herself. The feelings of Mr. Corbley, on this afflicting occasion, are beyond description. He fell into a melancholy state of mind; during which, he could not preach, or scarcely do any thing else. Reflecting at length, that the hand of Providence was visible in the preservation of his own life, he took courage and recommenced his labours. His ministry was very effectual in that country: though thinly settled, he baptized three or four hundred persons. He was a man of great gifts; and esteemed by most, a very pious christian. His success drew upon him the resentment of the wicked; which they vented in a very diabolical manner. A base woman accused him of making frequent criminal proposals to her; and offered to confirm it by a solemn oath. Although he knew it to be false, and the church did not believe it; yet he thought it best to remain silent and not preach, until it could by some means be cleared up. They cited the woman to appear before a magistrate, in order to swear her to what she affirmed; and in the mean time were earnestly engaged in prayer. When she came before the magistrate, she was taken with a trembling; and for some time remained speechless. Some wished to excuse her, and let it pass off: but Mr. Corbley insisted on her swearing; which she did, and expressly

declared his innocence : and said it was a plot laid by certain persons whom she named.

In the time of the whiskey insurrection, as it is commonly called, Mr. Corbley was accused of taking an active part in favouring and aiding the insurgents ; for which, as being a distinguished man, the government chose to make an example of him. He was seized, and hastily carried to Philadelphia, which was upwards of two hundred miles from home ; and there kept in prison in great affliction. His wants while in prison were benevolently supplied by doctor Rogers, and others of his friends in Philadelphia. He was never brought to trial : and of course it cannot, with certainty, be said whether he was accused falsely or not. He was not accused of being an insurgent himself ; but aiding and abetting those that were. If this was the case, it was certainly a very imprudent piece of conduct ; yet, considering the state of things in that country, at that time, it must be viewed by the impartial, rather as an error of the head than of the heart. He lived about seven years after he was released from prison : during which time, he continued to occupy his talents and to do good. In 1805, he finished his course in peace.

Mr. Corbley, though a good preacher, was thought to do more good out of the pulpit than in it. He generally, after preaching, mixed with the congregations : and, by singing and pious exhortations, frequently made very serious impressions.

JOHN GARRARD.

Concerning Mr. Garrard much has already been said in the general history of the Regular Baptists. A few further remarks will finish his history. He came first from the bounds of the Philadelphia Affo-

ciation, and settled in Berkley county, on Opeckon creek. His removal to the Ketoston below the Ridge, with his return, &c. has been already mentioned. After he had again settled in Mill Creek church, he became a considerable traveller, sometimes with and sometimes without Mr. Thomas. He was a warm, zealous, and successful preacher; and highly reputed wherever he was known. He often acted as moderator to the association; and was by all esteemed as a venerable father in the church of God. He lived to be a very old man; and died about 1784.



JOSEPH ANTHONY.

Mr. Anthony ought to stand among the first of Israel's worthies; if not for talents, yet for what is much more valuable, for unfeigned piety, unwearied zeal, and extensive usefulness. For his first commencement as preacher, his persecutions, &c. see pages 12 and 17. His first useful labours after he could venture to travel out, were in the lower end of Henrico, Charles City, and James City; where he aided Mr. Baker in planting the churches in those parts. After a few years, he moved up to Henry county; and was there during the rest of his life, very laborious, and successful in turning many to righteousness. He seldom was in company with any irreligious persons, that he did not exhort them to repentance. He was for many years a leading character in the Strawberry Association. When the Mayo was taken off, he fell into that district; in which he acted as moderator as long as he lived. He died triumphant in the Lord.

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; — their works do follow them.

RICHARD MAJOR.

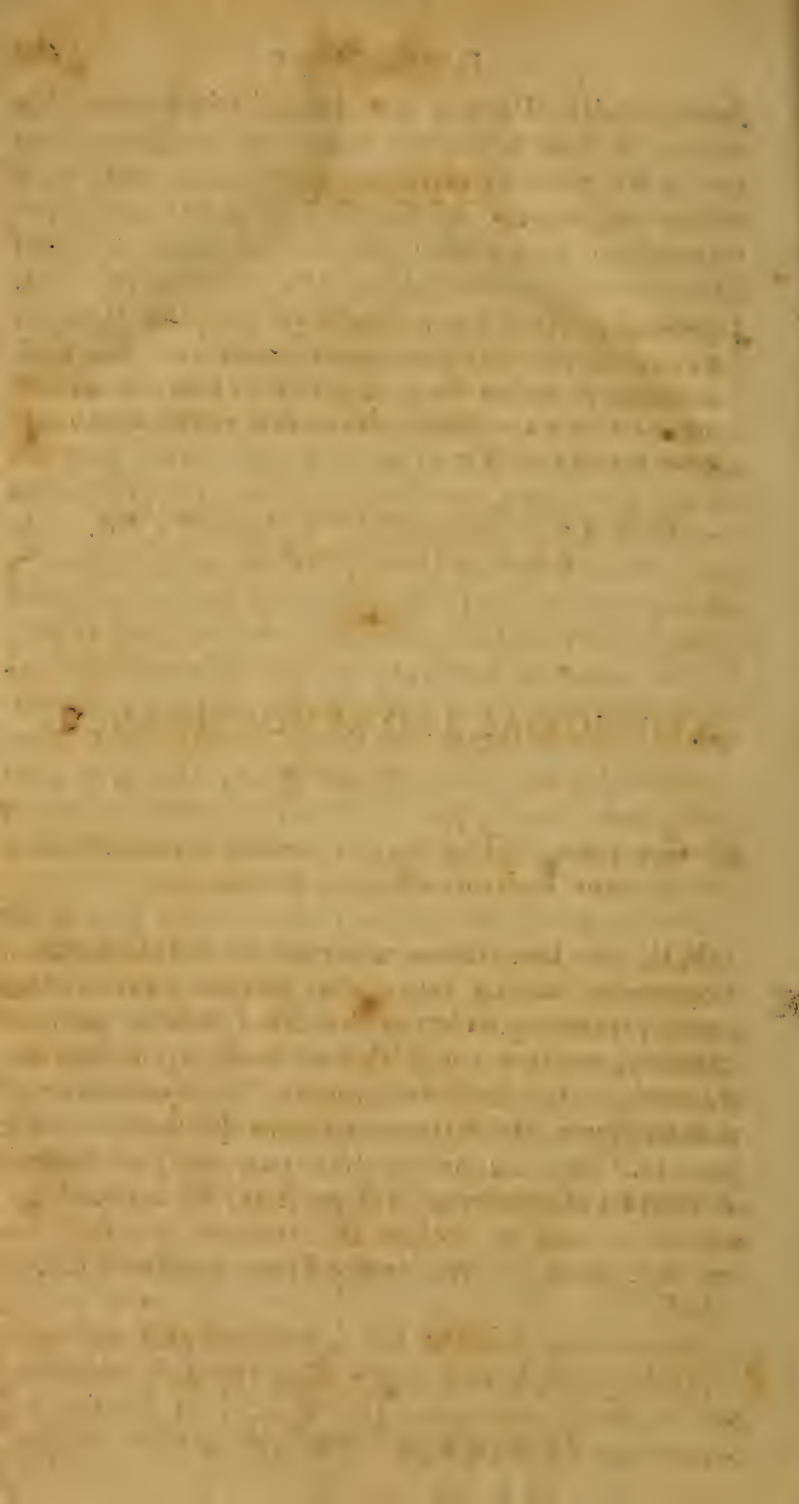
Mr. Richard Major was a native of New Jersey ; where he continued until he was thirty years of age ; and then moved into Loudon county, Virginia. During the early part of his life, he was harassed occasionally with awful convictions ; which he endeavoured to shake off, by resorting to wild company. They would, however, return upon him again with double force. When he had arisen to the years of maturity, he was still pursued by the most horrid temptations. Being a man of strong mind, he could not avoid starting objections to the gospel plan of salvation ; then he would be tempted to believe that he would be damned for such wisdom. Grace finally prevailed ; and he became a zealous christian.

He was not a man of much school learning ; but his vigorous mind rose above all obstructions. Well taught in the school of Christ, and devoting himself to the study of the scripture he became a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. *He sought not great things for himself* ; but in simplicity and godly sincerity he preached Christ crucified. He was remarked, by all who knew him, for his indefatigable labours in the ministry. From the time he entered on his work, until his constitution began to fail, he travelled far and near in order to persuade sinners to repent. He succeeded beyond many of much greater talents. He is said to have planted, from first to last, six or eight churches. For several years after he commenced preacher, he met with great opposition from individuals. A certain man, whose wife had been baptized by Mr. Major, determined to kill him on sight ; and went to meeting for that purpose. He sat down in hearing ; intending to catch at some obnoxious expression which might fall from Mr. Major ; and under that pretence to attack him. But God produced a dif-

ferent result. For the man instead of executing his design, became so convicted, that he could not keep on his feet : and was afterwards baptized by the man whom he intended to murder. Another really attacked him with a club in a violent manner. Mr. Major being remarkable for great presence of mind, turned to him, and in a solemn manner said, "Satan, I command thee to come out of the man." His club immediately began to fall, and the lion became as quiet as a lamb. These are a few of the many occurrences of this kind that took place in the long life of this valuable man. For ten or twelve years before his death, his sturdy constitution began to fail. He was attacked by the gravel, a very painful disease ; and in order to gain relief, he went to the medicinal springs. From the water he could get no relief ; but by apparent accident, he was informed of a remedy ;* which upon trial, he found very effectual. This gave him respite for several years. But being attacked by the same disease again, after a tedious and painful illness, he finished his course at about fourscore years of age. He has doubtless found a bright mansion in his Father's kingdom.

So much was he esteemed in the latter part of his life, that he had serious apprehensions, that he must be too much at ease for a gospel minister ; or, in other words, it seemed as if the expression, *woe be unto you when all men speak well of you*, applied to his case. In the midst of these thoughts, he accidentally heard a man lay to his charge one of the most abominable crimes. At first he felt irritated ; but recollecting his previous reflections, he was soon reconciled.

*The remedy was the juice of red onion mixed with the juice of horsemint ; taking a gill every morning.



APPENDIX.

▲ MEMORIAL AND REMONSTRANCE AGAINST THE GENERAL ASSESSMENT, PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA, AT THE SESSION FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY FIVE.

Drawn by James Madison, now President of the United States.

See ante 33.

A MEMORIAL AND REMONSTRANCE.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA.

WE, the subscribers, citizens of the said commonwealth, having taken into serious consideration a bill, printed by order of the last session of general assembly, entitled "A bill establishing a provision for teachers of the christian religion;" and conceiving, that the same, if finally armed with the sanctions of a law, will be a dangerous abuse of power; are bound as faithful members of a free state, to remonstrate against it, and to declare the reasons by which we are determined. We remonstrate against the said bill:

Because we hold it for a fundamental and unalienable truth, "that religion, or the duty which we owe to the Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction,

not by force or violence."* The religion, then, of every man, must be left to the conviction and consciences of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it, as these may dictate. This right is, in its nature, an unalienable right. It is unalienable; because the opinions of men depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds, cannot follow the dictates of other men. It is unalienable, also; because what is here a right towards man, is a duty towards the Creator. It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage, and such only, as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent, both in order of time, and in degree of obligation, to the claims of civil society. Before any man can be considered as a member of civil society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of the universe. And if a member of civil society, who enters into any subordinate association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the general authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular civil society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the universal Sovereign. We maintain, therefore, that, in matters of religion, no man's right is abridged by the institution of civil society; and that religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance. True it is, that no other rule exists, by which any question which may divide a society can be ultimately determined, but by the will of the majority. But it is also true that the majority may trespass on the rights of the minority.

Because if religion be exempt from the authority of the society at large, still less can it be subject to that of the legislative body. The latter are but the creatures and vicegerents of the former. Their jurisdiction is both derivative and limited. It is limited with regard to the co-ordinate departments: more

* Declaration of Rights, article 16.

necessarily, it is limited with regard to the constituents. The preservation of a free government requires, not merely that the metes and bounds which separate each department of power, be invariably maintained; but more especially, that neither of them be suffered to overleap the great barrier which defends the rights of the people. The rulers who are guilty of such an encroachment, exceed the commission from which they derive their authority, and are tyrants. The people who submit to it, are governed by laws made neither by themselves, nor by an authority derived from them, and are slaves.

Because it is proper to take alarm, at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy, to be the first duty of citizens, and one of the noblest characteristics of the late revolution. The freemen of America did not wait until usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much, soon to forget it. Who does not see that the same authority which can establish christianity in exclusion of all other religions, may establish, with the same ease, any particular sect of christians, in exclusion of all other sects? That the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property, for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment, in all cases whatsoever.

Because the bill violates that equality which ought to be the basis of every law; and which is more indispensable, in proportion as the validity or expediency of any law is more liable to be impeached. "If all men are, by nature, equally free and independent,"* all men are to be considered as entering into

society on equal conditions, as relinquishing no more, and therefore retaining no less, one than another, of their natural rights : above all, are they to be considered as retaining an “ *equal* title to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience.”* Whilst we assert for ourselves a freedom to embrace, to profess, and observe the religion which we believe to be of divine origin ; we cannot deny an equal freedom to those whose minds have not yet yielded to the evidence which has convinced us. If this freedom be abused, it is an offence against God, not against man. To God, therefore, and not to man, must an account of it be rendered.

As the bill violates equality, by subjecting some to peculiar burdens ; so it violates the same principle by granting to others, peculiar exemptions. Are the Quakers and Menonists the only sects who think a compulsive support of their religions unnecessary and unwarrantable ? Can their piety alone be entrusted with the care of public worship ? Ought their religions to be endowed, above all others, with extraordinary privileges, by which proselytes may be enticed from all others ? We think too favourably of the justice and good sense of these denominations, to believe, that they either covet preeminences over their fellow citizens, or that they will be seduced by them from the common opposition to the measure.

Because the bill implies, either that the civil magistrate is a competent judge of religious truths, or that he may employ religion as an engine of civil policy. The first is an arrogant pretension, falsified by the extraordinary opinion of rulers, in all ages, and throughout the world ; the second, an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation.

Because the establishment proposed by the bill is not

* Declaration of Rights, article 16.

requisite for the support of the christian religion. To say that it is, is a contradiction to the christian religion itself; for every page of it disavows a dependence on the power of this world; it is a contradiction to fact, for it is known that this religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them; and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence and the ordinary care of Providence: nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a religion not invented by human policy, must have preexisted and been supported, before it was established by human policy; it is moreover to weaken in those who profess this religion a pious confidence in its innate excellence and the patronage of its Author; and to foster in those who still reject it, a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its fallacies, to trust it to its own merits.

Because experience witnesses that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? more or less in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry, and persecution. Enquire of the teachers of christianity for the ages in which it appeared in its greatest lustre? those of every sect point to the ages prior to its incorporation with civil policy. Propose a restoration of this primitive state, in which its teachers depended on the voluntary rewards of their flocks, many of them predict its downfall. On which side ought their testimony to have greatest weight, when for, or when against their interest?

Because the establishment in question, is not necessary for the support of civil government. If it be urged as necessary for the support of civil govern-

ment, only as it is a means of supporting religion, and it be not necessary for the latter purpose, it cannot be necessary for the former. If religion be not within the cognizance of civil government, how can its legal establishment be said to be necessary to civil government? What influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments had on civil society? In some instances they have been seen to exact a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the civil authority; in more instances have they been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instance have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers who wished to subvert the public liberty, may have found an established clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just government instituted to secure and perpetuate it, needs them not. Such a government will be best supported by protecting every citizen in the enjoyment of his religion, with the same equal hand which protects his person and his property; by neither invading the equal rights of any sect, nor suffering any sect to invade those of another.

Because the proposed establishment is a departure from that generous policy, which, offering an asylum to the persecuted and oppressed of every nation and religion, promised a lustre to our country, and an accession to the number of its citizens. What a melancholy mark is the bill of sudden degeneracy? Instead of holding forth an asylum to the persecuted, it is itself a signal of persecution. It degrades from the equal rank of citizens all those whose opinions in religion do not bend to those of the legislative authority. Distant as it may be, in its present form, from the inquisition, it differs from it only in degree: the one is the first step, the other the last, in the career of intolerance. The magnanimous sufferer under the cruel scourge in foreign regions, must view the bill as a beacon on our coast, warning him to seek some other haven, where liberty and philan-

thropy in their due extent may offer a more certain repose from his troubles.

Because it will have a like tendency to banish our citizens. The allurements presented by other situations, are every day thinning their number. To superadd a fresh motive to emigration, by revoking the liberty which they now enjoy, would be the same species of folly, which has dishonoured and depopulated flourishing kingdoms.

Because it will destroy that moderation and harmony, which the forbearance of our laws to intermeddle with religion has produced among its several sects. Torrents of blood have been spilt in the old world, by vain attempts of the secular arm to extinguish religious discord by proscribing all differences in religious opinion. Time has at length revealed the true remedy. Every relaxation of narrow and rigorous policy, wherever it has been tried, has been found to assuage the disease. The American theatre has exhibited proofs, that equal and complete liberty, if it does not wholly eradicate it, sufficiently destroys its malignant influence on the health and prosperity of the state. If with the salutary effects of this system under our own eyes, we begin to contract the bounds of religious freedom, we know no name that will too severely reproach our folly. At least let warning be taken at the first fruits of the threatened innovation. The very appearance of the bill has transformed that "christian forbearance, love, and charity,"* which of late mutually prevailed, into animosities and jealousies which may not soon be appeased. What mischiefs may not be dreaded, should this enemy to the public quiet, be armed with the force of a law?

* Declaration of Rights, article 16.

Because the policy of the bill is adverse to the diffusion of the light of christianity. The first wish of those who ought to enjoy this precious gift ought to be, that it may be imparted to the whole race of mankind. Compare the number of those, who have as yet received it, with the number still remaining under the dominion of false religions, and how small is the former! Does the policy of the bill tend to lessen the disproportion? No; it at once discourages those who are strangers to the light of truth, from coming into the regions of it; and countenances by example, the nations who continue in darkness, in shutting out those who might convey it to them. Instead of levelling as far as possible every obstacle to the victorious progress of truth, the bill with an ignoble and unchristian timidity, would circumscribe it, with a wall of defence against the encroachments of error.

Because attempts to enforce by legal sanctions, acts, obnoxious, to so great a proportion of citizens, tend to enervate the laws in general, and to slacken the bands of society. If it be difficult to execute any law, which is not generally deemed necessary or salutary, what must be the case where it is deemed invalid and dangerous? And what may be the effect of so striking an example of impotency in the government on its general authority?

Because a measure of such singular magnitude and delicacy, ought not to be imposed, without the clearest evidence that it is called for by a majority of citizens; and no satisfactory method is yet proposed by which the voice of the majority in this case may be determined, or its influence secured. "The people of the respective counties are indeed requested to signify their opinion respecting the adoption of the bill, to the next session of assembly." But the representation must be made equal, before the voice

either of the representatives or of the counties, will be that of the people. Our hope is that neither of the former, will after due consideration, espouse the dangerous principle of the bill. Should the event disappoint us, it will still leave us in full confidence, that a fair appeal to the latter will reverse the sentence against our liberties.

Because finally, "the equal right of every citizen to the free exercise of his religion according to the dictates of conscience," is held by the same tenure with all our other rights. If we recur to its origin, it is equally the gift of nature; if we weigh its importance it cannot be less dear to us; if we consult the "Declaration of those rights which pertain to the good people of Virginia, as the basis and foundation of government,"* it is enumerated with equal solemnity, or rather with studied emphasis. Either then we must say, that the will of the legislature is the only measure of their authority; and that, in the plenitude of this authority, they may sweep away all our fundamental rights; or, that they are bound to leave this particular right untouched and sacred: either we must say that they may controul the freedom of the press; may abolish the trial by jury; may swallow up the executive, and judiciary powers of the state: nay, that they may annihilate our very right of suffrage, and erect themselves into an independent, and hereditary assembly; or we must say that they have no authority to enact into a law, the bill under consideration. We the subscribers say, that the general assembly of this commonwealth have no such authority; and that no effort may be omitted on our part against so dangerous a usurpation, we oppose to it this Remonstrance, earnestly praying, as we are in duty bound, that the supreme Lawgiver of the universe, by illuminating those to whom it is addressed, may, on one hand, turn their councils from every act, which would affront his no-

ly prerogative, or violate the trust committed to them; and, on the other, guide them into every measure which may be worthy of his blessing, may redound to their own praise, and may establish more firmly the liberties, the property, and the happiness of this commonwealth.

A GENERAL TABLE

OF THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATIONS.

The following table will furnish a general view of the state of the Virginia Associations; and likewise answer as an

INDEX,

To show in what part of the book each Association is treated on.

| Names of Associations, &c. | When con- futed. | Pre- sent num- ber of Churches. | Pre- sent num- ber of Members. | Page. | |
|--|---------------------|--|---|-------|-----|
| | | | | from | to |
| General Association | 1765 | | | 41 | 69 |
| General Committee | 1783 | | | 69 | 86 |
| General Meeting of Cor- respondence | 1800 | | | 86 | 89 |
| Dover Association | 1783 | 37 | 9628 | 90 | 138 |
| Orange | 1783 | | | 139 | 140 |
| Goshen | 1791 | 19 | 2650 | 141 | 168 |
| Aibemarle | 1791 | 9 | 1037 | 169 | 173 |
| Culpeper | 1791 | 18 | 1353 | 174 | 193 |
| Middle District | 1783 | 8 | 1329 | 194 | 207 |
| Appomattox | 1804 | 16 | 2114 | 208 | 218 |
| Menerrin | 1804 | 16 | 980 | 219 | 231 |
| Roanoke | 1788 | 30 | 2510 | 232 | 259 |
| Strawberry | 1766 | 24 | 1728 | 260 | 267 |
| New River | 1793 | 9 | 348 | 268 | 274 |
| Holston | 1788 | 10 in V. | 591 | 275 | 278 |
| Mountain | 1799 | 3 in V. | 190 | 278 | 279 |
| Accomack | 1808 | 7 | 891 | 280 | 288 |
| Ketocton | 1765 | 32 | 2061 | 298 | 324 |
| Greenbrier | 1807 | 9 | 356 | 325 | 335 |
| Union | 1804 | 13 | 262 | 336 | 339 |
| Rea Stone | 1776 | 7 in V. | 344 | 340 | 342 |
| Portsmouth | 1790 | 20 | 2170 | 343 | |
| Mayo* | 1798 | | | 364 | |
| Totals | | 287 | 30,548 | | |

* The accounts from Mayo are not come to hand; of course this association must be left almost blank. *See the next page.*

N. B. According to the note at the foot of the preceding page, the accounts from Mayo Association have not come to hand. But the Compiler however can inform the reader, that the churches composing this association are partly in North Carolina, and partly in Virginia. Those in Virginia, are in the counties of Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania, and are in number, the Compiler thinks, about seven; which, if added to the others, amount to two hundred and ninety four churches in the whole state. Admitting the average number in the churches, the same as that of Strawberry, the mother association, the whole number of members will be five hundred and four; which added to thirty thousand five hundred and forty eight, make the total amount of Baptists in Virginia *thirty one thousand and fifty two*. Asplund's Register for 1791, soon after the great revival, makes the number of Baptists twenty thousand four hundred and thirty nine, in Virginia. The increase in nineteen years is more than fifty per cent. During this period, it has been supposed, that, more than one fourth of the Baptists of Virginia have moved to Kentucky and other parts of the western country.

END.

200

250

140

1290

2500

3000

200

500

500

500

